

Orthodoxy's View of Man

The question, What is man? if answered from a so-called "orthodox theological" standpoint (which we dispute) would be about as follows: Man is a composite being of three parts, body, spirit and soul; the body is born after the usual manner of animal birth, except that at the time of birth God interposes, and in some inscrutable manner implants in the body a spirit and a soul, which are parts of himself, and being parts of God are indestructible, and can never die. These two parts, spirit and soul, "orthodoxy" is unable to separate and distinguish, and hence uses the terms interchangeably at convenience. Both terms (spirit and soul) are understood to mean the *real man*, while the flesh is considered to be merely the outward clothing of the real man, in which he dwells for the years of his earthly life, as in a house. At death, they say, the real man is let out of this prison-house of flesh, and finds himself in a condition much more congenial.

In other words, "orthodoxy" claims that the real man is not an earthly being, but a spirit being wholly unadapted [E303] to the earth, except through its experiences in the fleshly body. When set free from the body by death it is theorized that a great blessing has been experienced, although the man, while he lived, made every effort to continue to live in the fleshly house, using medicines and travels and every hygienic appliance and invention to prolong the life in the flesh, which, theoretically, it is claimed is illy adapted to his uses and enjoyments. The "liberation" called "death" is esteemed to be another step in the evolutionary process: and in many minds such a future evolution from earthly to heavenly conditions, from animal to spiritual conditions, is regarded as a reasonable proposition and a logical outcome of the scientific conclusion that man was not created a man, but evolved, through long ages, from the protoplasm of prehistoric times to the microbe, from the microbe, by various long stages and journeys to the monkey, and from the monkey finally to manhood. It is further claimed that manhood, in its earliest stage, was very inferior to the manhood of the present time, that evolution has been bringing mankind forward, and that the next step for every human being is a transformation or evolution into spirit conditions, as angels and gods or as devils.

All this is very flattering to nineteenth century pride, for though, on one hand, it acknowledges an ancestry of the very lowest intelligence, it claims for itself today the very highest attainments, as well as a future exaltation. Nor is this view confined to the people of civilized lands: in a general way all heathen people, even savages, have practically the same thought respecting man, except that they do not usually trace back his origin so far. This view finds support in all the heathen philosophies, and to a considerable extent it is

supported by the scientific theorizers of the present day, who, although they define the subject quite differently, nevertheless love to indulge in hopes of a future life along the lines of evolution, and experience a gratification of their vanity along lines which do not at all accord with their own scientific deductions respecting the spark of life in man.

Man—Body, Spirit, Soul

Accepting the standard definition of the word "animal"—"a sentient living organism," we need have no hesitation in classing man as one of and the chief and king over earth's animals, and thus far the Scriptures are in full accord with the deductions of science. Note the text which introduces this chapter: in it the Prophet David particularly points out that man, in his nature, is lower than the angels, and a king and head over all earthly creatures, the representative of God to all the lower orders of sentient beings.

The Scriptures nowhere declare, either directly or by implication, that a piece, part or spark of the divine being is communicated to every human creature. This is a baseless assumption on the part of those who desire to construct a theory, and are short of material for it. And this baseless hypothesis, that there is a portion of God communicated to every human creature at birth, has been made the basis of many false doctrines, grossly derogatory to the divine character—disrespectful to divine wisdom, justice, love and power.

It is this assumption, that a spark of the divine being is [E308] communicated at birth to every human creature, which necessitated the theory of a hell of eternal torment. The suggestion is that if man had been created as other animals were created, he might have died as other animals die, without fear of an eternity of torture; but that God having imparted to man a *spark of his own life*, man is therefore eternal, because God is eternal: and that hence it is impossible for God to destroy his creature even though such destruction might become desirable. And if man cannot be destroyed it is held that he must exist to all eternity somewhere: and since the vast majority are admittedly evil, and only a "little flock" saintly and pleasing to God, it is held that the unsaintly must have a future of torment proportioned to the future of bliss accorded to the saintly few. Otherwise, it is admitted that it would be more to man's interest, more to God's glory, and more to the peace and prosperity of the universe, if the wicked could all be *destroyed*. The claim is that God, having the power to create, has not the power to destroy man, his own creation, because a spark of divine life was in some unexplained manner connected with him. We hope to show that this entire proposition is fallacious: that it is not only without Scriptural support, but that it is a fabrication of the Dark Ages, most positively contradicted by the Scriptures.

The Scriptures recognize man as composed of two elements, body and spirit. These two produce **soul**, sentient being, intelligence, the man himself, the being, or **soul**. The term "body" applies merely to the physical organism. It neither relates to the life which animates it, nor to the sentient being which is the result of animation. A body is not a man, although there could be no man without a body. The spirit of life is not the man; although there could be no manhood without the spirit of life. The word "spirit" is, in the Old Testament Scriptures, from the Hebrew word *ruach*. Its signification primarily is *breath*; and hence we have the expression "*breath of life*," or "*spirit of life*," because the spark of life once started is supported by breathing.

[E309]

The words "spirit of life," however, signify more than merely breath; they relate to the spark of life itself, without which breath would be an impossibility. This spark of life we receive from our fathers, it being nourished and developed through our mothers.* It is quite untrue that the spark of human life is communicated in a miraculous way, any more than is the spark of brute life. The lower animals, the horse, the dog, cattle, etc., are begotten of the males and born of the females of their respective genera, in precisely the same manner as the human species is produced, nor does anything in Scripture suggest the contrary. It is purely human invention, designed to uphold a false theory, that claims divine interposition in the birth of human offspring. To suppose that God is the direct creator of every human infant born into the world is to suppose what the Scriptures contradict, for thus he would be the author of sin and of confusion and of imperfection, whereas the Scriptures declare, "His work is perfect." ([Deut. 32:4](#)) No, no! the mentally and physically and morally blemished and deformed are not God's workmanship. They are far removed, far fallen from the condition of their perfect progenitors, Adam and Eve, for whose creation alone God takes the responsibility. Those who claim that God directly creates every human being make out that God is responsible for all the idiocy and insanity and imbecility in the world: but both science and Scripture declare that the children inherit from their progenitors their vices and their virtues, their weakness and their talents. The Apostle most explicitly declares, "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world and death by [as a result of] sin: and thus death passed upon all men; because all men had [by heredity] become sinners." The Prophet refers to the same thing when he declares, "The fathers ate a sour grape [sin] and the children's teeth are set on edge"—they are all depraved. [Rom. 5:12](#); [Jer. 31:29,30](#); [Ezek. 18:2](#)

*See page 98.

[E310]

But some one will inquire, Might it not be possible that God had implanted a spark of his **immortal** divinity in our first parents, and that thus that spark descends *nolens volens* to posterity? Let us examine the Scriptural statement respecting this subject, and in so doing let us remember that there is no other revelation than the account of the Scriptures open to any one else, hence we may know all there is to be known on the subject by anybody. What do we find in the Genesis account? We find indeed that man's creation is particularly mentioned, while that of the brute creation is not so particularly mentioned. We find, however, that the statements made are in very simple language, and that they contain no suggestion whatever of the impartation of some superhuman spark of being. Man's superiority over the beast, according to the account given in Genesis, consists not in his having a different kind of breath or spirit, but in his having a higher form, a superior body, a finer organism—endowed with a brain organism which enables him to reason upon planes far above and beyond the intelligence of the lower animals, the brute creation. We find that it is in these respects that man was created a fleshly likeness of his Creator, who is a spirit being. [John 4:24](#)

The Spirit of Man

As already seen* the word "spirit" in our Common Version Bibles translates the Hebrew word *ruach* and the Greek word *pneuma*; and hence to rightly appreciate the word *spirit* in God's Word we must keep always in memory the meaning attached to the originals, which it translates. As we have seen, "spirit" primarily means *wind*, and secondarily was made to apply to any *invisible power*. In connection with God we saw that it signifies that he is *powerful* but *invisible*; and used in reference to God's influence and operation, it implies that they are by an invisible power. It is applied to *mind* because it is a power that is invisible, intangible; *words* [E311] are also invisible, yet powerful; *life*, although all-important and all pervading, is an invisible power or quality, like electricity: hence the word "spirit" is applied to all of these various things. As a result, we have the Scriptures speaking of the spirit of our minds, the invisible power of the mind; the spirit of a man, a man's mental powers and will; the spirit of life, the power of living, which actuates our bodies and all creation; the Spirit of God, the power or influence which God exerts, either upon animate or inanimate things; the spirit of wisdom, a wise mind; the spirit of love, a mind or disposition actuated by love; a spirit of evil and of malice, a mind or disposition actuated by maliciousness; the spirit of truth, the influence or power exerted by the truth; the spirit of the world, the influence or power which the world exerts. Likewise, heavenly beings are described as spirit beings, that is,

invisible beings, possessed of power, intelligence, etc. This is applicable, not only to God, the Father, of whom our Lord Jesus said, "God is a Spirit," but it is applicable also to our Lord Jesus since his resurrection, for of him it is declared, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." It is applied also to angels and to the Church, which is assured that in the first resurrection each overcomer shall have a spirit body. It is applied in the Scriptures also to Satan and his associates, spirit beings, invisible, yet powerful.

*See page 172.

Spirit in Re the New Nature in the New Testament

In considering the use of the word *spirit* in connection with man, we remark:

(1) The words "spirit" and "spiritual" in the New Testament are often used to refer to (a) the *will*, especially to the *new mind* of the "saints," begotten by the Word and Spirit of God. The "new creatures in Christ" are called to a change of nature, from human to spiritual, and are promised that if faithful they shall in the resurrection have (b) *spirit bodies* like unto Christ's resurrection body, and like unto the heavenly Father's glorious person. In view of this, their future prospect, the hope of the Church is designated as [E312] (c) *spiritual and heavenly*, in contrast with the hopes and promises to which the world of mankind will become heirs during the Millennium. Spirit is also used (d) in referring to angels, who by nature are *spirit* beings—not *flesh* beings. But the thought of *invisibility* always attaches to the words "spirit" and "spiritual" whenever and wherever used.

A few illustrations of such uses of these words follow:

(a) "Paul purposed in the *spirit* [*pneuma*—mind, will]...to go to Jerusalem." [Acts 19:21](#)

(a) "Paul's *spirit* [*pneuma*—mind, feelings] was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." [Acts 17:16](#)

(a) "Paul was pressed in *spirit* [*pneuma*—in mind, he was mentally energized] and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ." [Acts 18:5](#)

(a) "[Apollos] was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in *spirit* [*pneuma*—of ardent mind] he spake and taught diligently." [Acts 18:25](#)

(a) "God is my witness whom I serve with my *spirit* [*pneuma*—my new mind, my new heart, my renewed will] in the gospel of his Son." [Rom. 1:9](#)

(a) "Glorify God in your body and in your *spirit* [*pneuma* mind] which are God's." [1 Cor. 6:20](#)

(a) "I verily as absent in body but present in *spirit* [*pneuma*—mentally] have judged already as though I were present." [1 Cor. 5:3](#)

(a) "A meek and quiet *spirit* [*pneuma*—mind, disposition]." [1 Pet. 3:4](#)

(b) "It is sown an animal body, it is raised a *spiritual* [*pneumatikos*] body." [1 Cor. 15:44](#)

(b) "There is an animal body and there is a *spiritual* [*pneumatikos*] body." [1 Cor. 15:44](#)

(b) "That was not first which is *spiritual*[*pneumatikos*]." [1 Cor. 15:46](#)

(b) "Afterward that which is *spiritual*[*pneumatikos*]." [1 Cor. 15:46](#)

[E313]

(c) "To be *spiritually* minded [*pneuma*—to have a mind controlled by God's holy Spirit or will] is life and peace." [Rom. 8:6](#)

(c) "Ye which are *spiritual* [*pneumatikos*—spirit begotten and possessed of the new mind] restore such an one in the *spirit* [*pneuma*—disposition] of meekness." [Gal. 6:1](#)

(c) "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with all *spiritual* blessings [*pneumatikos*—blessings of a spirit kind] in heavenly privileges in Christ." [Eph. 1:3](#)

(c) "Be filled with the *spirit* [*pneuma*—the holy Spirit of God] speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and *spiritual* songs [*pneumatikos*—songs in accord with your new spirit]." [Eph. 5:18-19](#)

(c) "That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and *spiritual* understanding [*pneumatikos*—understanding of all matters connected with your new spiritual relationship to God and his plan]." [Col. 1:9](#)

(c) "Ye are built up a *spiritual* household [*pneumatikos*—a family or household of a spirit order or kind]." [1 Pet. 2:5](#)

(d) "A damsel possessed of a *spirit* [*pneuma*—an invisible power] of divination"—through fellowship with the fallen spirit-beings. [Acts 16:16](#)

(d) "Paul...turned and said to the *spirit*[*pneuma*—the evil spirit-being possessing the woman] I command thee...to come out of her." [Acts 16:18](#)

(d) "The evil *spirits* [*pneuma*] went out of them." [Acts 19:12,13](#)

(d) "And the evil *spirit* [*pneuma*] answered and said." [Acts 19:15](#)

(d) "The Sadducees say that there is...neither angel nor *spirit* [*pneuma*—spirit being]." [Acts 23:8](#)

(d) "If a *spirit* [*pneuma*] or an angel hath spoken to him let us not fight against God." [Acts 23:9](#)

[E314]

Spirit in the Old Testament

(2) The word "spirit" is used of mankind in general, especially in the Old Testament; but always either with reference to (e) *the spirit of life*, the animating spark which God first enkindled in Adam and which thence (impaired) descended to all his posterity—which is an *invisible power* or quality; or (f) *the spirit of the mind*, the will—an invisible power which controls the life.

Ruach, Pneuma—an Animating Power

When speaking of man's creation it is the *spirit of life* that is understood—the breath of life. The Scriptures clearly show that this spirit of life is common to all God's creatures, and is not possessed exclusively by man, as the following Scripture quotations will clearly demonstrate.

(e) "All flesh wherein is *the breath of life* [*ruach*—the *spirit* or *breath* of life of all flesh]." [Gen. 6:17; 7:15](#)

(e) "All in whose nostrils was the breath of *the spirit of life* [margin, *ruach*—the *spirit* or *power* of life]." [Gen. 7:22](#)

(e) "The *spirit* of Jacob their father revived [*ruach*—the vital or *life powers* of Jacob revived]." [Gen. 45:27](#)

(e) "And when he [Samson] had drunk, his *spirit* [*ruach*] came again and he revived [his strength, vigor, energy returned to him]." [Judges 15:19](#)

(e) "In whose hand is... *the breath* [*ruach*] of all mankind. [The *spirit of life* of all mankind is in the divine power]." [Job 12:10](#)

(e) "O God, the God of the *spirits* [*ruach*—life-power, spirit of life] of ALL FLESH, shall one man sin and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" [Num. 16:22](#)

The theory that the distinction between man and beast consisted in a different spirit of life, a different kind of life, and that at death the one went up and the other down [E315] seems to have been very old amongst the world's philosophers; for we find Solomon, the wise man, querying:

(e) "Who knoweth [who can prove] that the *spirit* [*ruach* —spirit of life] of man goeth upward and that the *spirit* [*ruach*—spirit of life] of the beast goeth

downward to the earth?" ([Eccl. 3:19-21](#)) Solomon's own understanding he gives just previously, saying:

(e) "That which befalleth the sons of men [death] befalleth beasts; even one [the same] thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea they have all one *breath* [*ruach*—spirit of life, breath of life]; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast"—in this respect, in the matter of having a different kind of life—his pre-eminence must be sought and found elsewhere, as we shall see.

(e) "Into thine hand I commit my *spirit*[*ruach*—spirit of life or vital energy]." [Psa. 31:5](#)

This was the prophetic declaration of our Lord Jesus' dying words. He had received the spirit of life from the Father as a gift: he had, in obedience to the Father's plan, become a man to be man's Redeemer: and when yielding up his *spirit of life* or vital energy, he declared his reliance upon God's promise to give the *spirit of life* again, by a resurrection.

Mankind received the *spirit of life* from God, the fountain of life, through father Adam. Adam forfeited his right to the power or spirit of life by disobedience, and gradually relinquished his hold upon it—dying slowly for nine hundred and thirty years. Then the body returned to the dust as it was before creation, and the spirit of life, the privilege of living, the power or permission of living, returned to God who gave that privilege or power: just as any contingent privilege or favor returns to the giver if its conditions are not complied with. ([Eccl. 12:7](#)) Nothing in this text implies that the spirit of life "wings its flight back to God," as some would represent; for the spirit of life is not an intelligence, nor a person, but merely a *power* or *privilege* which has been [E316] forfeited and hence reverts to the original giver of that power or privilege. The thought is that man having sinned has no further *life* -rights: the return of his forfeited life-rights to God, and the return of his flesh to dust, reduces his condition to exactly what it was before he was created.

But as our Lord Jesus had hope in the divine promise for a return of his "spirit of life" or life powers and rights under divine arrangement, so by reason of our Lord's redemptive sacrifice certain hopes and promises are opened to all mankind through "Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant." ([Heb. 12:24](#)) Hence believers "sorrow not as others who have no hope." Our Redeemer *purchased* the spirit of life-rights which father Adam had forfeited for himself and all his family. Now, therefore, believers can for themselves (and, by a knowledge of God's plan, for others also) commit their spirits (their powers of life) to God's hand also, as did our Lord and as did Stephen—full of faith that God's promise of a *resurrection* would be fulfilled. A resurrection

will mean to the world a reorganization of a human body, and its vivifying or quickening with life-energy, the spirit of life (Hebrew, *ruach*; Greek, *pneuma*). To the Gospel Church, sharers in the "first [chief] resurrection," it will mean the impartation of the spirit of life or life-energy (Hebrew, *ruach*; Greek, *pneuma*) to a spirit body. [1 Cor. 15:42-45](#)

In that graphic picture of earthly resurrection furnished us in Ezekiel's prophecy ([37:5-10,13,14](#)) the relationship of the body and the spirit of life, "*the breath*," is clearly presented. It matters not that the prophet uses this merely as a *symbol*, it nevertheless shows (proves) that a human organism has no life until it receives the *ruach*—the breath of life—which, as elsewhere shown, is common to all animals, none of whom can live without it. Let us notice Ezekiel's statements very critically, as follows:

(e) "I will cause *breath* [*ruach*—spirit of life, life-energy] to enter into you, and ye shall live."

(e) "And I will...bring up flesh upon you, and cover **[E317]** you with skin, and put *breath*[*ruach*—spirit of life, life-energy] in you, and ye shall live."

(e) "And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no *breath* [*ruach*—spirit of life, life-energy] in them."

(e) "And he said unto me, Prophesy unto the *wind* [*ruach*—spirit of life, life-energy—margin, breath] and say unto *the wind* [*ruach*—spirit of life, breath of life], Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four *winds* [*ruach*] *O breath* [*ruach*—breath or spirit of life], and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

(e) "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and *the breath* [*ruach*—spirit of life, breath of life, living energy] came into them, and they lived."

(e) "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my *spirit* [*ruach*—spirit of life, breath of life] in you, and ye shall live."

This *spirit* of life or *power* of life given to Adam by his Creator he was privileged to *keep* forever if obedient. He forfeited this right by disobedience, and the *right to life* reverted to the great Giver; not as a person, nor as a thing, but as a right or privilege, the spirit of life returns or reverts to God, who gave that right or privilege conditionally, and whose conditions were violated. [Eccl. 12:7](#)

(e) "No man hath power over the *spirit*[*ruach*—spirit of life, spark of life] to retain the *spirit* [*ruach*—spirit of life], breath of life." [Eccl. 8:8](#)

By God's grace those forfeited life-rights or privileges which each man surrenders to God in death have all been purchased with the precious blood, and the purchaser is announced as the new Life-giver, regenerator or father for the race, who will give life, and that more abundantly, to all who will ultimately receive him.

We will give but one instance from the New Testament:

(e) "The body without the *spirit* [*pneuma*—life-spark, breath of lives] is dead." [Jas. 2:26](#)

[E318]

Ruach, Pneuma—the Mind, the Will

Since the mind or will is an *invisible power* or influence, it is represented by the same words in the Hebrew and Greek languages, as the following examples will show:

(f) "Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful *spirit* [*ruach*—mind, disposition]." [1 Sam. 1:15](#)

(f) "A fool uttereth all his *mind* [*ruach*—plans, thoughts, mind, purpose]." [Prov. 29:11](#)

(f) "My *spirit* [*ruach*—mind, courage] was overwhelmed." [Psa. 77:3](#)

(f) "My *spirit* [*ruach*—mind] made diligent search." [Psa. 77:6](#)

(f) "He that is of a faithful *spirit* [*ruach*—disposition, mind]." [Prov. 11:13](#)

(f) "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the *spirits* [*ruach*—the mind, thoughts, motives]." [Prov. 16:2](#)

(f) "Pride goeth before destruction, a haughty *spirit* [*ruach*—disposition, will, mind] before a fall." [Prov. 16:18](#)

(f) "Better to be of an humble *spirit* [*ruach*—mind, disposition]." [Prov. 16:19](#)

(f) "Vanity and vexation of *spirit* [*ruach*—mind]." [Eccl. 6:9](#)

(f) "Patient in *spirit* [*ruach*—mind, disposition]...proud in *spirit* [*ruach*—mind, disposition]...hasty in thy *spirit* [*ruach*—mind, disposition]." [Eccl. 7:8,9](#)

A few illustrations from the New Testament:

(f) "The child [John] grew and waxed strong in *spirit* [*pneuma*—mind, character]." [Luke 1:80](#)

(f) "Not slothful in business, fervent in *spirit*[*pneuma*—mind, disposition, character] serving the Lord." [Rom. 12:11](#)

(f) "Now you have received not the *spirit*[*pneuma*—disposition, mind] of the world." [1 Cor. 2:12](#)

(f) "I had no rest in my *spirit* [*pneuma*—mind]." [2 Cor. 2:13](#)

[E319]

(f) "Be renewed in the *spirit* [*pneuma*—character, disposition] of your mind." [Eph. 4:23](#)

(f) "The ornament of a meek and quiet *spirit*[*pneuma*—mind, disposition]." [1 Pet. 3:4](#)

These Scriptural uses of these original words show that our English word *spirit* is a good equivalent, for we not only speak of the spirit of life, but also of a gentle spirit, a good spirit, an angry spirit or mood, a bitter spirit and a fiery spirit: and we also use these expressions in respect to the lower animals as well as man. The fact we are proving is abundantly demonstrated—namely, that the *spirit* is not the real man, nor another man, but that this word, when used in reference to man's creation, signifies simply the life-spark or life-power, which is common to all animals.

Neshamah—the Breath of Lives

Although the word *ruach* is sometimes translated "breath," the Hebrews had another word for breath, viz., *neshamah*. It occurs twenty-six times, and in nineteen of these it is translated "breath"—"inspiration" once, "spirit" twice, "souls" once, "blast" three times. As samples of the meaning of this word, and as proving that the word simply signifies life power, and in no sense of the word conveys any thought of everlasting life, or **immortality**, note the following uses of the word:

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and *breathed* [*naphach*—inflated, blew] into his nostrils the *breath* [*neshamah*] of *lives* [*caiyah*]." [Gen. 2:7](#)

"All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beasts, and of everything that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the *breath*[*neshamah*] of *life* [*caiyah*] of all that was in the dry land died." [Gen. 7:21,22](#)

These first two occurrences of the word *neshamah* in the Bible are abundantly sufficient to prove our contention that the word has no reference to **immortality**, nor to an **immortal**[E320] principle, but simply refers to vitality, life power. This life power, we are told, was given to Adam, and the

same life power, by the second text quoted, is declared to have been in all the dry land animals, fowl, cattle, beast and creeping things, as well as in man, and when deprived of this breath of life, the declaration is that all these souls or beings died as a result—man as well as the lower creatures. They died alike, except that there is a divine purpose respecting man, which in due time provided a ransom, and will in further due time provide the deliverance promised from the power of death by a resurrection of the being, of the soul.

A Human Soul

Many in reading the account of creation in Genesis have noted the fact stated that when God had formed man of the dust of the ground, and had communicated to him the breath (spirit) of life, the record is, "Man became a *living soul*." This statement to the average reader taken in connection with his general misconception of the meaning of the word "soul," as misrepresented to him by those who should have instructed him properly, and should have understood the subject themselves, is sufficient to bewilder him and leads him to think that somehow there is some basis for the prevalent error which he does not comprehend, but which he supposes his chosen theological teachers have investigated and proven beyond peradventure.

Not comprehending the meaning of the word *soul*, many feel at liberty to use it in a reckless manner, and hence they reverse the Scriptural statement and instead of speaking of man as *being a soul*, they speak of man as *having a soul*, which is a very different thought. It is necessary, therefore, that each truth-seeker should, so far as possible, divest his mind of prejudice on the subject, and especially with respect to things and features which he admits he *does not understand*; because it is the natural tendency to give attributes [E321] and powers to that which is mysterious and not comprehended. Thus the general idea of a soul is that it is wonderfully intelligent, possessed of wonderful powers, that it is indestructible, intangible, and incomprehensible.

A Methodist bishop is credited with having given the following definition of a soul, which certainly accords well with so-called "orthodox" theories, even if it is absurd when closely analyzed—"It is without interior or exterior, without body, shape, or parts, and you could put a million of them in a nutshell." These various things are predicated of a soul, to help fill out a theory which is wholly erroneous. The theory is that the soul is the real being, a spark of divinity, possessed of divine quality and intelligent life, etc., separate and apart from the body; and that it inhabits the human body for a time, and uses it for a house, and when the body is worn out or disabled abandons it. Inasmuch as no one ever saw a soul enter a body, and inasmuch as a soul cannot be found while it is in the body, by the most critical examination, and with all the

improved appliances of the microscope, photograph and "X" rays, therefore it is supposed that it is "without a body, without shape, and without parts"; and since it is supposed to be so small that it cannot be distinguished by a microscope, it might as well be said that you could put fifty millions of them in a nutshell. Really, the bishop gave an excellent definition of *nothing*; and all will agree that a hundred millions of nothings could be put into the smallest kind of a nutshell and have room to spare.

But what foundation is there for such wild speculation? We answer, It is wholly unwarranted. It is the result of man's taking his own theory of a future life, and rejecting the divine theory and plan. Human theory says, There must be something which never dies, else there can be no future life. The divine theory says, The same God who created in the beginning is able to resurrect the dead. This is the conflict between the Word of God and all the human theories of earth amongst the civilized as well as amongst [E322] the barbarians: all human theories teach that man does not die, and hence has no need of a Life-giver and a resurrection. The Bible theory is that man does die, and that without the Life-giver, and without a resurrection, death would indeed end all, and there would be no future life.

It is to support its theory that the world, and all its religious books (including, we are sorry to say, the majority of works on eschatology written by professed Christians), teach the doctrine of the **immortality** of the **soul**—that there is a **soul** in man, possessed of a separate life from his body, and that it is **immortal**, indestructible, and therefore destined to an eternity of pain or pleasure. We come then to the inquiry:

What Is a **Soul**?

Examining this question from the Bible standpoint we will find that man *has* a body and *has* a spirit, but *is* a **soul**. Science concurs with the Scriptures in this. Indeed, one of the sciences, Phrenology, undertakes to treat the skulls of men and the lower animals as indexes and to read therefrom the natural traits and characteristics of the owners: and do not all men find themselves possessed of some ability in judging character physiologically? All can discern between the intellectual and the idiotic, between the kindly benevolent and the viciously brutal. Those who have not learned that *organism* (bodily form) is indissolubly connected with nature, character and disposition have made poor use of life's lessons and are unprepared to pass judgment on our topic or any other.

The word "**soul**," as found in the Scriptures, signifies *sentient being*; that is, a being possessed of powers of sense, sense-perception. With minds freed from prejudice, let us go with this definition to the Genesis account of man's

creation, and note that (1) the organism or *body* was formed; (2) the *spirit* of life, called "breath of life," was communicated; (3) *living* [E323] *soul*, or sentient being, resulted. This is very simple, and easily understood. It shows that the body is not the *soul*, nor is the spirit or breath of life the *soul*; but that when these two were united by the Lord, the resultant quality or condition was living man, living being—a living *soul*, possessed of perceptive powers. There is nothing mysterious about this—no intimation that a spark of divinity was infused into humanity, any more than into the lower animals. Indeed, while the creation of the lower animals is passed over and not particularly described, we may know that with them, as well, the process must have been somewhat similar. We know that there could be no dog without a dog organism or body, nor without spirit or breath of life in that body. The body of the dog that had never been animated would not be a dog; it requires first the infusion of the spark of life, the breath of life, then doghood begins. The same would apply to all animals.

In full accord with this, we now call attention to a fact which will surprise many; viz., that according to the Scriptural account every dog is a *soul*, every horse is a *soul*, every cow is a *soul*, every bird and every fish are *souls*. That is to say, these are all *sentient* creatures, possessed of powers of sense-perception. True, some of them are on a higher and some on a lower plane than others; but the word *soul* properly and Scripturally applies to creatures on the lower planes as well as to man, the highest and noblest—to fish, reptiles, birds, beasts, man. They are all *souls*. Mark, we do not say that they *have* *souls*, in the ordinary and mistaken sense of that term, yet they all do *have* *souls*, in the sense of having *life, being, existence*—they *are* living *souls*. Let us prove this:

In the *first, second and ninth chapters of Genesis* the words "living *soul*" are applied in the Hebrew language to the lower animals nine times, but the translators (as though careful to protect the false but common vagary respecting a *soul*, derived from Platonic philosophy) sedulously guarded their work, so that, so far as possible, the English [E324] reader is kept in ignorance of this fact—that the word *soul* is common to the lower creatures, and as applicable to them as to man in inspired Scripture usage. How else could it happen that in all of these cases, and in many other instances throughout the Scriptures, they have carefully covered the thought, by using another English word to translate the Hebrew word, which, in the case of man, is rendered "*soul*"? So carefully have they guarded this point that only in one place in the Bible is this word translated "*soul*," in connection with the lower creatures, viz., in [Num. 31:28](#), and there, very evidently, they were compelled to show

the matter, by reason of the peculiar construction of the sentence—no other translation being reasonably possible. The passage reads:

"Levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle: one **soul** of five hundred, both of the persons and of the beeves and of the asses and of the sheep." Here it will be noticed that the word "**soul**" is used respecting the lower creatures as well as in reference to man; and so it would appear elsewhere in the Scriptures, had the translators been free from the warp and twist of their false theories on this subject.

Let us now notice the nine texts in Genesis in which the Hebrew original of the word **soul**(*neh-phesh*) occurs in connection with the lower animals:

"God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving [creeping] creature *that hath life* [Heb., *neh-phesh* —**soul**]." ([Gen. 1:20](#)) Note that the marginal reading is **soul**; and that this was on the fifth creative day or period, long before man's creation.

"God created great whales, and every living *creature* [Heb., *neh-phesh*—living **soul**] that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly." ([Gen. 1:21](#)) This also was in the fifth "day," before man's creation. These were *fish - souls*.

"God said, Let the earth bring forth the living *creature* [Heb., *neh-phesh*—living **soul**] after his kind—cattle and creeping thing and beast." ([Gen. 1:24](#)) These were dry-land [**E325**] **souls**, higher than the fishes—but man, human **soul** or being, had not yet been created.

"And God said....To every beast of the earth and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is *life* [living **soul**—*neh-phesh*] I have given every green herb for meat." ([Gen. 1:30](#)) Here the lower animals are specified, and it is distinctly declared that they are all living **souls**—in exactly the same terms that refer to man.

"Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air;...and whatever Adam called every living *creature* [Heb., living **soul**—*neh-phesh*], that was the name thereof." ([Gen. 2:19](#)) Comment here is unnecessary: there can be no question that **soul** is not exclusively a *human* part or quality, but rightly understood is applicable to all *sentient creatures* from the lowest to the highest—all creatures possessed of sensibilities.

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you...but flesh *with the life thereof* [Heb., flesh, **soul**—*neh-phesh*] which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." ([Gen. 9:3,4](#)) Here the animals which man may eat are not only declared to possess **soul** or *being*, but their *blood* is said to represent

their *existence, being* or **soul**, and hence man is forbidden to use blood as food— forbidden to cultivate blood-thirstiness.

"Behold I establish my covenant with you [Noah] and with your seed after you; and with every living *creature* [Heb., living **soul**—*neh-phesh*] that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth." ([Gen. 9:9,10](#)) A very plain statement that all living creatures are **souls** as well as man— though inferior to him in nature, organism, etc.

"This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living *creature* [Heb., living **soul**—*neh-phesh*]." ([Gen. 9:12](#)) What could be more explicit than this?

"I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living *creature* [Heb., every living **soul**—*neh-phesh*] of all flesh." [Gen. 9:15](#)

[E326]

The same expression exactly is repeated in *verse 16*. And there is no room for cavil as to the meaning when the veil of mistranslation is lifted and we catch the thought God wished us to receive from his Word.

We might similarly proceed through other books of the Bible, but we have quoted sufficient to establish our contention before any reasonable mind— that **soul** in Scriptural usage as properly applies to the lower animals as to man; and hence that all claims or theories built upon the idea that man's hopes of a future life and his present superiority over lower animals result from his being a **soul** and they not, is a false theory and needs radical reconstruction if we would see matters from the true standpoint of divine revelation.

But let no one misunderstand us to teach that because all living, moving creatures, from a mite to an elephant and from a tadpole to a whale are *living souls*, therefore all these must have a future life, either by a transfer to spirit conditions or by a resurrection future. Such a thought would be arrant nonsense—insanity—without a shadow of reason. Billions of living **souls** on these lowest planes of animal nature are born every minute, while other billions die every minute.

Our argument is that man is a **soul** or *being* of the highest order—the king and lord over the lower orders of **souls** or sentient beings, yet one of them—an earthly, human animal **soul**; and yet so grandly constituted originally (Adam) that he was properly described as in the *likeness* of God—the image of him that created him.

Man as a **soul** is differentiated from the lower animals or **souls** by reason of his higher *organism*: not merely is his superiority indicated by his upright form; it is witnessed to by his superior mental endowments, which are Godlike

and are reflected in his countenance. It is in his mental and moral endowments rather than in physical form that man was created in divine likeness. While many of the lower orders of animal **soul** or being possess *reasoning powers* and demonstrate them in thousands of ways, yet each has a level [E327] beyond which no progress can be made; but man's reasoning powers are almost unlimited, because he was created an "*image of God*," "the likeness of him that created him." And notwithstanding man's fall into sin and his thousands of years of gross darkness and degradation we can still see Godlikeness—especially in those who have accepted Christ's ministry of reconciliation to God, and have again become "sons of God," and who are seeking to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son.

To illustrate: horses, dogs and birds may be taught the meaning of many words so as to be able to understand many things pertaining to life's affairs. They often demonstrate their reasoning powers, and some are able to count—as high as twenty: but who would attempt to teach a horse or a dog or a bird algebra or geometry or astronomy? The highest of the lower animals can be taught a certain degree of moral honesty and obligation to their masters—not to kill sheep, not to bite, kick, etc., but who would attempt to teach his dumb brutes the Decalogue? They may be taught a certain kind of love for their master and his friends, but who would think of teaching them to love or worship God, or more than mere endurance of enemies who had spitefully used them.

The point to be noticed is that all these differences are not by reason of the lower animals having a different kind of *breath* or spirit of life, for as we have seen, "they have all *one breath*" (*Eccl. 3:19*); nor because man is a **soul** and the brute beast is not, for as we have seen they are all **souls**. But as we have found, and as all men are witnesses, each has a *different* bodily organism which gives to each his different characteristics, and which alone constitutes one higher and the other lower in the scale of intelligence. Notice, too, that not size and weight give excellence and superiority, else the elephant and whale would be the lords of earth; the excellence is in the "*organic quality*" represented chiefly in brain-structure and functions.

Man, therefore, is the highest type of earthly creature—"of the earth, earthy"—and his excellence consists in the superiority [E328] of his mental endowment—not a development, but a gift from his Creator.

"The **Soul** That Sinneth, It Shall Die"

It is quite in harmony with the foregoing, but quite out of harmony with the usual thought on the subject, that we find the Scriptures declaring repeatedly the death of the **soul**, which human philosophy and hymn-book theology most

emphatically declare to be indestructible. We read, for instance, that our Lord, when he became our ransom-price, "poured out his *soul* [being] unto death." "He made his *soul* an offering for sin." (*Isa. 53:10,12*) This was necessary, because it was Adam's *soul* that was sentenced to death, and the promise to mankind is a redemption of *soul* or being from the power of death. "God will redeem my *soul* from the grave [*sheol*—the condition of death]." (*Psa. 49:15*) And, as we have seen, it is because all *souls* are thus redeemed in the one redemption that all our friends—all mankind—are said to "sleep in Jesus." [*1 Thess. 4:14*](#)

We remark here that the Apostle could not, in this expression, refer merely to the saints, as when he speaks of those who are "in Christ"; for those referred to as "new creatures" are those only who are begotten of God through the Spirit, to joint-heirship with Christ, as his Church, the members of his body. But "those who sleep in Jesus" include the entire race, for our Lord Jesus was a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, and he is by virtue of that sacrifice our Life-giver, and not only ours, but also the Life-giver for the whole world—the testimony and the opportunity for acceptance being, with the majority, still future. [*1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:4-6*](#)

That the Apostle has this thought in mind is manifest from this context: he is here exhorting believers to sorrow not as others who have no hope; and gives as the reason of [E329] the hope this fact, that Jesus died for man's sin, and rose again to be man's justifier, and hence that all "sleep in Jesus," or are legally freed from the death sentence, and amenable to Jesus, to be brought from the dead by the divine power. Had the Apostle said or been understood to mean that merely the saints would be thus blessed through Jesus, we can readily see that believers then and since would have very little consolation in his words, because the vast majority of the friends of believers, then and since, cannot be termed saints: and if the awakening from the sleep of death is a blessing intended only for the saints, the thought, instead of being a consolation, would be the reverse, an anguish, a distress. But the Apostle refers to the whole world as being thus *asleep* in Jesus, although none knows it from this standpoint except the heavenly Father and his consecrated people, whom he has instructed respecting his future gracious plans, through the Word of truth, that they may rejoice in the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of divine goodness, and "sorrow not, even as others that have no [such substantial] hope."

As the natural sleep, if sound, implies total unconsciousness, so with death, the figurative sleep—it is a period of absolute unconsciousness—more than that, it is a period of absolute non-existence, except as preserved in the

Father's purpose and power. Hence the awakening from death, to those restored, will mean a revival of consciousness from the exact moment and standpoint where consciousness was lost in death. There will be no appreciation of time, as respects the interim. The moment of awakening will be the next moment after the moment of death, so far as conscious appreciation is concerned.

This same condition has been noted in connection with persons who have sustained injuries which have caused pressure upon the brain, and thus temporarily suspended consciousness, without extinguishing life. In cases of this kind, when the pressure upon the brain has been removed by trepanning, the subject suddenly coming to consciousness[E330] has in numerous instances been known to complete a sentence which had been interrupted by the concussion which interrupted thought: for divine power will thoroughly duplicate every convolution of every brain and vivify them. Thus in the awakening-time the world of mankind in general will revive with the same words and thoughts with which they expired. But let it not be forgotten that we here refer to the world in general, not to the elect and special class selected out of the world, namely, the Church, the body of Christ, which will have part in the first resurrection, and in many respects know a different experience.

But while, as the Adamic death has been turned, by reason of the divine plan and the ransom, from being a *destruction* to a *suspension* of existence, called sleep, nevertheless we find that the Scriptures very distinctly assert that after the revival or awakening from the death-sleep, it will depend upon each individual whether he shall go on unto perfection and life, under the guidance, government and tutelage of the glorious Christ, or whether he will wilfully, deliberately and stubbornly choose the way of sin. If he choose the latter he will get the punishment originally designated for father Adam, viz., death, but no longer Adamic death, the penalty of Adam's sin: this is styled Second Death. This Second Death is nowhere spoken of as a *sleep*, nor is there the slightest intimation anywhere given that there will be any awakening from it. On the contrary, it is designated "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." [2 Thess. 1:9](#)

Of this redeemed and awakened class, which in general shall have its trial during the Millennial age, the Scriptures declare, "The **soul** that sinneth it shall die." ([Ezek. 18:20](#)) That this scripture is not generally applicable at the present time is evident from three considerations:

(1) It would be meaningless, at the present time, when all die—saints and sinners.

(2) It is expressed in the form of a second sentence, and [E331] based upon the individual action, and this could not be applicable in the present time, because now we all die because of "one man's disobedience," and the sentence of death which came upon *him*, and indirectly affects all his race. [Rom. 5:12](#)

(3) The context shows that this passage refers particularly to those who have gotten free from Adamic sin which prevails in general today. Its special applicability, therefore, must belong to the next age, the Millennial age. Note the connections, not forgetting that the law covenant of the Jewish age was analogous to the covenant of the Millennial age, except that the latter will have a better Mediator, able and willing to succor and to help all who shall seek to walk righteously, not imputing unintentional shortcomings.

The context declares: This shall no more be a proverb in Israel, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But, on the contrary, each **soul** shall be responsible to God for itself, and "the **soul that sinneth** it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." ([Ezek. 18:2,4,20](#)) It is evident that this time has not yet come. The children still have their "teeth set on edge," by reason of the sour grapes of sin which their fathers have eaten; we are still under the law of heredity; all still die for Adam's sin, and not for individual sin. In proof of this note the indisputable fact that nearly one-half of the human family die in infancy, without having reached years of discretion or responsibility on their own account. Who cannot see that the agonizing and dying infant of a few days or a few months old is not dying for *its own sins*, but that it is dying because it is a member of the Adamic race, which is still under the curse pronounced against our father Adam, "Dying thou shalt die"? It has inherited a share of the curse, and will also inherit a share of God's blessing through Christ in the coming [E332] awakening, secured through the merit of the great Atonement finished at Calvary.

If we turn to [Jeremiah 31:29-34](#), we find another reference to exactly the same conditions mentioned by Ezekiel, only that in Jeremiah we are furnished with more explicit details, which show that this condition belongs not to the present age, but to a future age. Jeremiah declares:

"*In those days* they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one [who dies] shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape his teeth shall be set on edge."

The words "In those days" clearly refer to the future times of restitution, under the reign of Christ, and not to the present time of the reign of sin and death. Notice that the Prophet proceeds to describe other features of the Millennial age, telling about the New Covenant which is to be confirmed to Israel and Judah, the everlasting covenant, under which they shall obtain their long-looked-for portion of the Abrahamic blessings and promises. Compare [Rom. 11:26-31](#)

This same thought, that death will again be the penalty for sin, to all redeemed from the Adamic death, if after they come to a knowledge of the grace of God, they receive that grace in vain, is shown by our Lord's own words, "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the **soul** [fear not them which take away the present life, which is already under sentence of death, anyway; but remember that you have been redeemed, and that a future life is a possibility to you, and that no man can rob you of that which God has provided for you through the redemption in Christ Jesus], but fear him that can destroy both **soul** and body in Gehenna." ([Matt. 10:28](#)) Here the power of God to destroy the **soul** is positively asserted, and that by an unquestionable authority. We are aware that a crooked theology has sought to wrest the Scriptures, and therefore asserts that this signifies that God is able to *destroy the happiness* of the **soul** in Gehenna, but that he is unable to destroy the **soul** [E333] itself. We reply, that this is a wresting of the Scriptures, and their perversion in a manner which cannot fail to bring evil consequences upon those who "handle the word of God deceitfully." We elsewhere show* that the word "Gehenna" here used signifies "the Second Death"—utter destruction—to all **souls** which will not hear God's great Prophet, when, in due time, he shall speak plainly unto all the people, as he now is speaking under parables and dark sayings, expounded only to the Church. [Acts 3:23](#); [Matt. 13:11](#)

*" *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?*" Address the publishers.

We claim, therefore, that the Scriptures unquestionably declare that *man* is a **soul** or being; that his right to existence under divine arrangement was forfeited by sin, and that he is now under the curse or penalty of the divine sentence, *death*; that man's privileges and rights were all purchased by the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; that as a consequence death is not to be accounted as death, utter destruction, but merely as a temporary "sleep," from which the world of mankind will be awakened by their Redeemer in the resurrection morning of the Millennial age.

Confusion Through Mistranslations

It should not surprise us when we find that, holding grossly erroneous views respecting what is the **soul**, what is the spirit, what is the real man, the translators of our Common Version English Bible have been sorely perplexed: and in their endeavor to force the translation into harmony with their preconceived ideas on this subject, they have confused the ordinary English reader tenfold. They have so covered and twisted the meaning of words as to make it extremely difficult for the English reader to see through the now double difficulty, (1) the false teaching on the subject, and (2) the mistranslations which support that false teaching.

[E334]

However, in divine providence, we are now living in a day provided with helps of every kind, so that man or woman of even ordinary education, with the helps before him, can get a better view of the entire subject than the translators themselves had. There are now three works which give the English reader a tolerably clear insight into the Common Version English Bible, and show exactly how it has translated the Hebrew and Greek originals. (1) *The Englishman's Hebrew and Greek Concordance of the Holy Scriptures* [unsectarian]. (2) Professor Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* [Presbyterian]. (3) Dr. Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* [Methodist]. All three of these give each word of the Scriptures, and show the original from which it is derived. And although we have mentioned the denominations represented in these different Concordances, it is but fair to say that, so far as we have yet observed, denominational prejudices have not been permitted to interfere with the accuracy of any of them. Although gotten up on somewhat different lines, their testimony is harmonious and accurate, the differences between them being those of convenience and utility.

Examining these standard works what do we find? This: that the Hebrew word *neh-phesh*, which is generally rendered "**soul**" (436 times) throughout the Old Testament, and which has the signification of "sentient being," is translated in thirty-six different ways, as follows: "any," 4 times; "appetite," 2; "beast," 1; "body," 4; "breath," 1; "creature," 9 [see [Gen. 1:21,24; 2:19; 9:10,12,15,16; Lev. 11:46](#), twice]; "dead," 5; "deadly," 1; "desire," 3; "discontented," 1; "fish," 1 ([Isa. 19:10](#)); "ghost," 2; "greedy," 1; "hath," 1; "he," 1; ([Psa. 105:18](#)); "heart," 15; "heartly," 1; "herself," 1; "her," 1; "himself," 4; "life," 100; "lust," 2; "man," 2; "me," 3 ([Num. 23:10; Judges 16:30; 1 Kings 20:32](#)); "mind," 15; "mortally," 1; "myself," 1 ([Psa. 131:2](#)); "one," 1 ([Lev. 4:27](#)); "own," 1 ([Prov. 14:10](#)); "person," 24 ([Gen. 14:21; 36:6; Num. 31:19; 35:11,15,30; Deut. 10:22; 27:25; Josh. 20:3,9](#));

"pleasure," 3; "self," 21; "slay," 1; [E335] "thing," 2 ([Lev. 11:10](#); [Ezek. 47:9](#)); "will," 3; "your," 3.

The Greek word, *psuche* [sentient being], of the New Testament corresponding to *neh-phesh*, is translated "soul," fifty-six times; is also translated "mind," three times ([Acts 14:2](#); [Phil. 1:27](#); [Heb. 12:3](#)); "heart," once ([Eph. 6:6](#)); "life," forty-one times.

Amongst these variations in translation none has served to obscure the truth more than the last. It has tended to give the impression that the *life* is one thing, and *soul* or being another thing; and has fostered the idea that a man might lose his life, without losing his *soul*, his being. The following are the instances in which the word *psuche* is translated *life*, but would better have prevented confusion if translated *being* or *soul*:

"Which sought the young child's *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being]." [Matt. 2:20](#)

"Take no thought for your *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being], what ye shall eat." [Matt. 6:25](#)

"Is not the *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] more than meat?" [Matt. 6:25](#)

"He that findeth his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] shall lose it, and he that loseth his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] for my sake shall find it." [Matt. 10:39](#)

"Whosoever will save his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being], for my sake shall find it." [Matt. 16:25](#)

"The Son of man came...to give his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] a ransom for many." [Matt. 20:28](#)

"Is it lawful to save *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being], or to kill?" [Mark 3:4](#)

"Whosoever will save his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own *soul* [*psuche*—*life*, being], or what shall a man give in exchange for his *soul* [*psuche*—*life*, being]?" [How few English readers are aware that "life" and "soul," each used [E336] twice in this scripture, are from the same Greek word *psuche*.] [Mark 8:35-37](#)

"The Son of Man came to give his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] a ransom for many." [Mark 10:45](#)

"Is it lawful to save *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] or to destroy it?" [Luke 6:9](#)

"Whosoever will save his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his *life* [*psuche*—*soul*, being] for my sake the same shall

save it. For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be cast away?" [Luke 9:24](#)

"The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's *lives* [*psuche*—souls, beings], but to save them." [Luke 9:56](#)

"Take no thought for your *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." [Luke 12:22,23](#)

"If any man come to me, and hate not [love not less] his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] also, he cannot be my disciple." [Luke 14:26](#)

"Whosoever shall seek to save his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] shall preserve it." [Luke 17:33](#)

The thought in this last text, and in several preceding it, is that the Lord's people are to remember that their present existence or being is under sentence of death anyway; but that divine grace has provided redemption—not a continuance of being, but a resuscitation, a resurrection, a living again. The call of this Gospel age is to lay down our lives in the Lord's service, as living sacrifices, following the example of our Redeemer—the promise being that all believers in Christ who so do, faithfully, shall be granted a share with him in the divine nature, through the operation of the first resurrection. Thus they will get back again their soul, being, existence—with "*life* [*zoe*]" more abundant." [John 10:10](#)

"The good Shepherd giveth his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] [E337] for the sheep [our Lord "poured out his soul unto death; he made his soul an offering for sin." [Isa. 53:10,12](#)]." [John 10:11](#)

"I lay down my *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] for the sheep." [John 10:15](#)

"I lay down my *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] that I might receive it again [according to the divine promise and power, through the resurrection]." [John 10:17](#)

"He that loveth his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] shall lose it; and he that hateth his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] in this world shall preserve it unto life eternal." [John 12:25](#)

The thought here is, that faithfulness to God under present evil conditions necessarily means dissatisfaction with present conditions, and a willingness to sacrifice them all in the service of God and righteousness and our fellow creatures—and thus, according to the divine provision, to be accounted worthy

of *existence* [soul, being] under the more favorable conditions of the dispensation to come. He who loves the present conditions of things, and who values the enjoyments and pleasures of the present time higher than he values righteousness and obedience to God, will thus be proving himself unworthy of the future existence God has proffered us, unworthy to have his soul, his being, restored in the first resurrection.

"Wilt thou lay down thy *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] for my sake?" [John 13:38](#)

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] for his friends." [John 15:13](#)

"Men that have hazarded their *lives* [*psuche*—souls, beings]." [Acts 15:26](#)

"Trouble not yourselves, for his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] is in him [he has not expired, or breathed out existence]." [Acts 20:10](#)

"Neither count I my *life* [*psuche*—soul, being, existence] dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." [Acts 20:24](#)

The Apostle had learned to rightly view the present *existence* [E338] as of small value in comparison to the future one promised in the resurrection. He did not count it "dear," precious, in the sense of valuing it more than the Lord and the Lord's favor, and the opportunities for serving the Lord's cause. He was willing to spend and be spent in the Master's service, in hope of attaining to the first resurrection, as he explicitly tells us in [Phil. 3:8-11](#).

"Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our *lives* [*psuche*—souls, beings]." [Acts 27:10](#)

"There shall be no loss of any man's *life* [*psuche*—soul, being]." [Acts 27:22](#)

"I am left alone, and they seek my *life* [*psuche*—soul, being]." [Rom. 11:3](#)

"Who have for my *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] laid down their own necks." [Rom. 16:4](#)

"Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being], supplying your lack of service toward me." [Phil. 2:30](#)

"Because he laid down his *life* [*psuche*—soul, being—"he poured out his soul unto death; he made his soul an offering for sin"] for us; and we ought to lay down our *lives* [*psuche*—souls, beings] for the brethren." [1 John 3:16](#)

"The third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had *life* [*psuche*—soul, being] died." [Rev. 8:9](#)

"They loved not their *lives* [*psuche*—souls, beings] unto death." [Rev. 12:11](#)

Once we get our minds clear upon this subject of the soul and obtain a clear understanding of just how the words *neh-phesh* and *psuche* are used throughout the Scriptures, by the inspired writers, it removes all the mystery that has heretofore been shrouded under the obscure words, soul and ghost, which, not only to the ignorant, but also to many of the educated, have meant something indefinite, indescribable and incomprehensible.

But let none get the thought that the body *is* the soul: this [E339] is an error, as our Lord's words clearly show—"God is able to destroy both soul and body." But on the other hand there can be no soul, no sentient being without a body—heavenly or earthly, spiritual or animal.

Going to the Genesis record of man's creation we see that the body was formed first, but it was not a man, soul or being, until animated. It had eyes, but saw nothing; ears, but heard nothing; a mouth, but spoke nothing; a tongue, but no taste; nostrils, but no sense of smell; a heart, but it pulsated not; blood, but it was cold, lifeless; lungs, but they moved not. It was not a man, but a corpse, an inanimate body.

The second step in the process of man's creation was to give vitality to the properly "formed" and in every way prepared body; and this is described by the words "blew into his nostrils the breath of life." When a healthy person has been drowned and animation is wholly suspended, resuscitation has, it is said, been effected by working the arms and thus the lungs as a bellows, and so gradually establishing the breath in the nostrils. In Adam's case it of course required no labored effort on the part of the Creator to cause the perfect organism which he had made to breathe the life-giving oxygen of the atmosphere.

As the vitalizing breath entered, the lungs expanded, the blood corpuscles were oxygenized and passed to the heart, which in turn propelled them to every part of the body, awakening all the prepared but hitherto dormant nerves to sensation and energy. In an instant the energy reached the brain, and thought perception, reasoning, looking, touching, smelling, feeling and tasting commenced. That which was a lifeless human *organism* had become a *man*, a sentient being: the "*living soul*" condition mentioned in the text had been reached. In other words, the term "*living soul*" means neither more nor less than the term "*sentient being*"; i.e., a being capable of sensation, perception, thought.

Moreover, even though Adam was perfect in his organism, it was necessary for him to *sustain* life, soul or sentient [E340] being, by partaking of the fruits of the trees of life. And when he sinned, God drove him from the garden,

"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree [plural *trees* or *grove*] of life, and eat, and *live forever* [i.e., by eating continuously]." ([Gen. 3:22](#)) How the fogs and mysteries scatter before the light of truth which shines from God's Word!

Although, because of his fall into sin and death, man's condition is far from what it was in its original perfection when pronounced "very good" by the highest Judge, so that some, by the cultivation of the lower organs of thought and a failure to use the higher intellectual faculties, have dwarfed the organs of the brain representing these higher faculties, yet the *organs* are still there, and are capable of development, which is not the case with the most nearly perfect specimens of the brute creation. So then it is in that the Creator has endowed man with a higher and finer *organism*, that he has made him to differ from the brute. They have similar flesh and bones, breathe the same air, drink the same water, and eat similar food, and all are **souls** or creatures possessing intelligence; but man, in his *better body*, possesses capacity for higher intelligence and is treated by the Creator as on an entirely different plane. It is in proportion as sin degrades man from his original likeness of his Creator that he is said to be "brutish"—more nearly resembling the brutes, destitute of the higher and finer sensibilities.

Those whose eyes of understanding begin to open to this subject, so that they see that the word "**soul**" signifies intelligence, being, and the word "breath" or "spirit of life" signifies the divine power to live, can readily see, from the foregoing, that every creature which possesses life-consciousness has, first of all, a body or organism; secondly, the spirit of life animating it, and thirdly, existence, being, **soul**, as a result. An illustration which helps some to grasp the proposition is the similarity between heat and **soul**. If a lump of coal is placed under favorable conditions, giving access to the oxygen of the air, and then ignited, a new thing will be produced—*heat*. The coal is not heat, though it [E341] possesses some of the qualities which, under favorable conditions, would produce heat; neither is the oxygen heat, yet it also, under favorable conditions, may be an element in producing heat. So, to carry the analogy, the body is not the **soul**, though the body possesses the qualifications necessary to **soul**; neither is the breath or spirit of life the **soul**—it is the power which came from God, and which is necessary to the production of the sentient creature. The body, when properly united with the breath or spirit of life, produces a new thing—a being, a **soul**, a sentient creature.

And the process of dissolution, death, is in harmony with these facts. If the breath or spirit of life be withdrawn, death results. Now the question is, what dies? Does the breath or spirit of life die? Surely not; it never had sentient being, it is a principle or power, like electricity; it has no thought, no feeling;

it could not die. Does the body die? We answer, No. The body may lose the life with which the Father animates it, but the body of itself, apart from the breath or spirit of life, had no consciousness, no feeling, no sense, and could not, therefore, be said to die; it was *inanimate* before the breath or spirit of life came into it; it was *animate* while the breath or spirit of life was in it; it becomes *inanimate* again, or dead, when the spirit of life is withdrawn.

What, then, dies? We answer that it is the **soul** that dies—the sentient being ceases. Let us remember that the sentient being was produced by the union of the breath or spirit of life with an organism, and that the separation or dissolution of these two causes the cessation of the being, the **soul**—death. That this is true of the lower animals, none would for a moment question; but is it not equally true of man, the highest animal, created in the intellectual image and moral likeness of God? It is no less true, and should be equally evident to every reasoning mind. We are aware that some few scriptures might be twisted and misunderstood to contradict this proposition, but in due course they will have consideration and will be found in most absolute accord with these presentations.

[E342]

Take another illustration of the relationship between the human or animal body, spirit and **soul**: an unlighted candle would correspond to an inanimate human body or corpse; the lighting of the candle would correspond to the spark of life originally imparted by the Creator; the flame or light corresponds to sentient being, or intelligence, or **soul** quality; the oxygenized atmosphere which unites with the carbon of the candle in supporting the flame corresponds to the *breath* of life or spirit of life which unites with the physical organism in producing **soul** or intelligent existence. If an accident should occur which would destroy the candle, the flame, of course, would cease; so if a human or animal body be destroyed, as by disease or accident, the **soul**, the *being*, intelligence, personality, *ceases*. Or if the supply of air were cut off from the candle flame, as by an extinguisher or snuffer, or by submerging the candle in water, the light would be extinguished even though the candle remained unimpaired. So the **soul**, life, existence, of man or animal would cease if the breath of life were cut off by drowning or asphyxiation, while the body might be comparatively sound.

As the lighted candle might be used under favorable conditions to light other candles, but the flame once extinguished the candle could neither relight itself nor other candles, so the human or animal body while alive, as a living **soul** or being can, under divine arrangement, start or *propagate* other **souls** or beings—offspring: but so soon as the spark of life is gone, **soul** or being has ceased, and all power to think, feel and propagate

has ceased. In harmony with this we read in the Scriptures of Jacob's children: "All the **souls** that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy **souls**." ([Exod. 1:5](#)) Jacob received his spark of life as well as his physical organism, and hence the united product of these, his **soul** or *intelligent being*, from Isaac, and hence from Adam, to whom alone God ever directly imparted life. And Jacob passed on the life and organism and **soul** to his posterity, and so with all humanity.

[E343]

A candle might be relighted by any one having the ability; but by divine arrangement the human body bereft of the spark of life, "wasteth away," returns to the dust from which it was taken, and the spark of life cannot be re-kindled except by divine power, a miracle. The promise of *resurrection* is therefore a promise of a relighting, a re-**enkindling** of animal existence or **soul**; and since there can be no being or **soul** without a body and restored life-power or spirit, it follows that a promised resurrection or restoration of **soul** or being *implies* new bodies, new organisms. Thus the Scriptures assure us that human bodies, which return to dust will not be *restored*, but that in the resurrection God will give such new bodies as it may please him to give. [1 Cor. 15:37-40](#)

The Apostle here declares that in the resurrection there will be a special class accounted worthy of a new nature, spiritual instead of human or fleshly: and, as we should expect, he shows that this great change of nature will be effected by giving these a *different kind of body*. The candle may here again serve to illustrate: suppose the fleshly or human nature to be illustrated by a tallow candle, the new body might be illustrated by a wax candle of a brighter flame, or indeed by an electric arc-light apparatus.

With any power and wisdom less than that of our Creator guaranteeing the resurrection, we might justly fear some break or slip by which the *identity* would be lost, especially with those granted the great change of *nature* by a share in the first (chief) resurrection to *spirit being*. But we can securely trust this and all things to him with whom we have to do in this matter. He who knows our very thoughts can reproduce them in the new brains so that not one valuable lesson or precious experience shall be lost. He is too wise to err and too good to be unkind; and all that he has promised he will fulfil in a manner exceedingly abundantly better than we can ask or think.

Many suppose that the bodies buried are to be restored atom for atom, but, on the contrary, the Apostle declares, [E344] "Thou sowest [in death] not that body which shall be." It is the **soul**, the sentient being, that God proposes to *restore* by resurrection power; and in the resurrection he will give to each

person (to each **soul** or sentient being) such a body as his infinite wisdom has been pleased to provide; to the Church, the "bride" selected in this age, *spirit* bodies; to the restitution class, human bodies, but not the ones lost in death. [1 Cor. 15:37,38](#)

As in Adam's creation, the bringing together of an *organism* and the *breath of life* produced a *sentient being* or **soul**, so the dissolution of these, from any cause, puts an end to sentient being—stopping thoughts and feelings of every kind. The **soul** (i.e., sentient being) ceases; the body returns to dust as it was; while the spirit or breath of life returns to God, who imparted it to Adam, and to his race through him. ([Eccl. 12:7](#)) It returns to God in the sense that it is no longer amenable to human control, as in procreation, and can never be recovered except by divine power. Recognizing this fact, the Lord's instructed ones commit their hope of future life by resurrection to God and to Christ, his now exalted representative. ([Luke 23:46](#); [Acts 7:59](#)) So, then, had God made no provision for man's future life by a ransom and a promised resurrection, death would have been the end of all hope for humanity. [1 Cor. 15:14-18](#)

But God has thus made provision for our living again; and ever since he made known his gracious plan, those who speak and write intelligently upon the subject (for instance, the inspired Scripture writers), as if by common consent, speak of the unconscious interim between death and the resurrection morning, in which sensibility (sentient being) is suspended, as a "*sleep*." Indeed, the illustration is an excellent one; for the moment of awakening will seem to them like the moment after the moment of their dissolution. For instance, we read that speaking of Lazarus' death our Lord said, "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*, I go that I may *awake him out of sleep*." Afterward, because the disciples were slow to comprehend, he said, "Lazarus is dead." ([John 11:11](#)) [E345] Were the theory of consciousness in death correct, is it not remarkable that Lazarus gave no account of his experience during those four days? None will claim that he was in a "hell" of torment, for our Lord called him his "friend"; and if he had been in heavenly bliss our Lord would not have called him from it, for that would have been an unfriendly act. But as our Lord expressed it, Lazarus *slept*, and he awakened him to life, to consciousness, to his *sentient being*, or **soul** returned or revived; and all this was evidently a favor greatly appreciated by Lazarus and his friends.

The thought pervades the Scriptures that we are now in the night of dying and sleeping as compared with the morning of awakening and resurrection. "Weeping may endure for a *night*, but joy cometh in the *morning*" ([Psa. 30:5](#))—the resurrection morning, when the sleepers shall

come forth from the tomb, as expressed by the Prophet: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust [of the earth]." [Isa. 26:19](#)

The apostles also frequently used this appropriate, hopeful and peaceful figure of speech. For instance: Luke says of Stephen, the first martyr, "*he fell asleep*"; and in recording Paul's speech at Antioch he used the same expression, "David *fell on sleep*." ([Acts 7:60](#); [13:36](#)) Peter uses the same expression, saying, "The fathers *fell asleep*." ([2 Pet. 3:4](#)) And Paul used it many times as the following quotations show:

"If her husband be dead [Greek, *fall asleep*]." [1 Cor. 7:39](#)

"The greater part remain unto this present, but some are *fallen asleep*." [1 Cor. 15:6](#)

"If there be no resurrection,...then they also which are *fallen asleep* in Christ are perished." [1 Cor. 15:13-18](#)

"Christ is risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that *slept*." [1 Cor. 15:20](#)

"Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all *sleep*." [1 Cor. 15:51](#)

[E346]

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that *are asleep*." [1 Thess. 4:13](#)

"Them that *sleep* in Jesus, will God bring [from the dead] with [by] him." [1 Thess. 4:14](#)

When the Kingdom, the resurrection time, comes, "we who are alive and remain unto the *presence* of the Lord shall not *precede* them that *are asleep*." [1 Thess. 4:15](#)

The same thought is presented by the Prophet Daniel: describing the resurrection he says—"Many that *sleep* in the dust shall awake"—and the description shows that these sleepers include both the good and bad. ([Dan. 12:2](#)) They "fell asleep" in peace, to await the Lord's day—the day of Christ, the Millennial Day—fully persuaded that he (Christ) is able to keep that which they committed unto him against that day. ([2 Tim. 1:12](#)) This same thought runs through the Old Testament as well—from the time that God first preached to Abraham the Gospel of a resurrection: the expression, "He slept with his fathers," is very common in the Old Testament. But Job puts the matter in very forcible language, saying, "Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy wrath be [over] past!" The present dying time is the time of God's wrath—the curse of death being upon all, because of the original transgression. However, we are

promised that in due time the curse will be lifted and a blessing will come through the Redeemer to all the families of the earth; and so Job continues, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, until my change come; [then] thou shalt call ([John 5:25](#)) and I will answer thee; thou shalt have a desire to the work of thine hands." ([Job 14:14,15](#)) And we of the New Testament times read our Lord's response, "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God [calling them to awake and come to a full knowledge of God and to a full opportunity of everlasting life]." [John 5:25,28,29](#)

This death-"sleep" is so absolutely a period of unconsciousness [E347] that the awakened ones will have no knowledge of the lapse of time. Indeed, "sleep" is merely an accommodated term, for really the dead are dead, utterly destroyed, except as God's wisdom preserves their identity, and has decreed through Christ their awakening—their reorganization and resuscitation. And this, indeed, will be a *re-creation*—a still greater manifestation of divine power than was the original creation of Adam and Eve. It will be the re-creation of fifty billions instead of two persons. It will be the reproduction of infinite varieties instead of one. Only our God possesses such omnipotent wisdom and power; he is both able and willing to perform. It is to be one of the benefits resulting from the permission of evil that its eradication will manifest all the features of divine character as they could not otherwise be manifested and known. Before both angels and men divine *justice* will shine, so will divine *love*, so will divine *power*, and finally the divine *wisdom* in preparing and permitting such an exhibition of God's character will be seen and owned by all his creatures also.

The Scriptural testimony regarding the necessity for a resurrection of the dead is most clear and explicit—and how could there be a resurrection of the *dead* if none are *dead*, but, as some maintain, "all who seem to die are more alive than they ever were"; thus contradicting the five senses of every intelligent being as well as the positive declaration of Scripture that "To all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living [even the least intelligent] know that they shall die, but the dead *know not anything*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is [very generally] forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion [interest] forever [Hebrew, *olam*—for a long indefinite period] in anything that is done under the sun....Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave* whither thou [the *soul*, the [E348] sentient being] goest." [Eccl. 9:4-10](#); [Isa. 26:14](#)

* *Sheol*—the state or condition of death as respects the *soul*, in contrast with grave, a tomb for a dead *body* which in the Hebrew is *qeber*. See [Psa. 30:3; 49:15; 89:48](#); where *sheol* is rendered grave. See [2 Chron. 34:28; Job 10:19; Psa. 88:5](#); where *qeber* is grave. Our Lord's *soul* went to *sheol* the condition of death ([Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:27](#)), but "he made his grave [*qeber*, tomb] with the wicked and rich." [Isa. 53:9](#)

"Thou destroyest the hope of man [in himself]. Thou prevailest forever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance and sendest him away. His sons come to honor and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." [Job 14:19-21; Isa. 63:16](#)

Note the significance of the Apostle's words in his celebrated treatise on the resurrection in [1 Cor. 15:12-54](#). He says:

"If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

If the dead are not dead, but more alive than ever, then none are dead, and surely there could be no resurrection of the dead. The Apostle held no such theory, but the very contrary, that the dead are *perished* like brute beasts unless God will resurrect them; and that our hopes for them are vain hopes except they be resurrection hopes. Mark well every word of this forceful argument by one of earth's greatest logicians. He says:

"If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen [but is still dead]: And if Christ be not risen [but still dead], then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain [because a dead Christ could know nothing and could help nobody]. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God [we are wicked deceivers instead of divinely appointed ambassadors]; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up—if so be [if it be true] that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not then is Christ not raised."

[E349]

It should be observed that the Apostle is not pressing his argument as respecting a resurrection of the *body*, but as respects a resurrection of being, or *soul*; "that his *soul* was not left in *sheol, hades*." ([Acts 2:31,32](#)) Had Paul the popular theory of our day respecting resurrection, he would have said something like this: Some of you speak of a resurrection of the *body* as though it were a matter of importance; but really the body is a "clog," a hindrance, a "prison house" for the *soul*, which is far better off when "set free." The resurrection of the body, whenever it comes, will be a calamity and imply the "re-fettering" of the *soul* and a limitation of its powers.

The Apostle said nothing of the kind because it would have been the reverse of the truth. He taught a resurrection of the **soul** or sentient being from unconsciousness, from death; but denied the resurrection of the body which died, saying, "Thou sowest *not* that body which shall be:...[in the resurrection of the **soul** or being] God giveth it a [new] body, as it hath pleased him, and to every [kind of] seed his own [appropriate kind of] body." ([1 Cor. 15:37,38](#)) The masses of mankind of human seed or kind will receive human bodies; but not the same bodies which mouldered to dust and whose fragments or atoms have passed into vegetable and animal organisms infinitesimal. The Church will receive spirit bodies like to that of their risen Lord and wholly unlike their earthly bodies—so much so that the Apostle declares, "It doth not yet appear what *we* shall be, but we know that when he shall appear *we* shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"—not as he was. [1 John 3:2](#)

But let us follow the Apostle's argument further. He declares:

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*." [Verses 17,18](#)

Those who claim that the **soul** cannot die and therefore does not die and who therefore deny the resurrection of the **[E350] soul** or sentient being, and who in consequence are forced by their argument to claim that Scriptural references to resurrection refer merely to the body, are in a quandary what to do with these words of the inspired Apostle. If they claim that our Lord was alive, "more alive than ever," during the three days the Scriptures declare he was dead, and think of his resurrection body as the one that lay in Joseph's tomb wounded and scarred, how could they claim that faith in a Christ who did not die (but who merely shed off his body for three days) is a "*vain*" faith? How can they acknowledge that such a faith does not release from condemnation? How could they claim that the "more-alive-than-ever" Christ "freed" from his body of flesh could not save sinners and hence that all that have fallen asleep in Christ have "*perished*?"

Their entire *theory* is in conflict with the Scriptural presentation of the *facts*. They deny that any **soul** could *perish* [Greek *apollomee*—be destroyed] while the Apostle says it could; and so says our Lord—"God is able to destroy both **soul** and body." They deny also that any "are fallen *asleep* in Christ" denying that death is a sleep, awaiting a resurrection morn awakening, while the apostles, our Lord and all the holy prophets unitedly declare it to be a "sleep" from which God's power alone can awaken to consciousness, **soul**, sentient being, on any plane of existence. For be it noted that those who experience the "change" of the first resurrection to the divine nature will be **souls** as truly as they were in their earthly nature. God is declared to be a **soul**, the same word *psuche* being used—"If any man draw

back, my *soul*[*psuche*—sentient being] shall have no pleasure in him." [Heb. 10:38](#)

The Platonic philosophy (that man does not and cannot die, but merely appears to do so) prevailed throughout Greece at the time of the first advent, and constituted the great obstacle to the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles. For instance, we read that when Paul preached at Athens he was listened to as a great teacher by the philosophers [E351] until he touched on the resurrection of the dead—that was enough; they had no further interest; they considered themselves far in advance of the Jewish idea that the dead can have no future existence except by a resurrection. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the *dead* [and thus discerned that Paul disagreed with their theory that the dead are more alive than ever] some mocked" and others said, That's enough at present. [Acts 17:32](#)

The heathen idea, that death is not death, but a step into broader conditions of life, had not to any extent permeated Jewish thought up to the time of the first advent. The Pharisees were the principal sect of the Jews, and our Lord declares them the successors and representatives of the Mosaic law, saying, "The scribes [writers] and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." ([Matt. 23:2](#)) The Sadducees, much less numerous than the Pharisees, were next as a sect in point of influence: they were really unbelievers, infidels. They denied entirely a future life, holding that man dies exactly as does the brute, and that there will be no resurrection of the dead. They were disbelievers in all the Messianic promises, deniers also of the superhuman intelligences, such as angels, etc. True, Josephus does call attention to a sect called the Essenes, which he declares held the Platonic theory prevalent amongst the Gentiles, to the effect that man never really dies, but merely takes a progressive step in life development, at the crisis termed death. But we are to remember that Josephus wrote his history of the Jews while at the Roman court, and that he wrote it with a view of influencing the minds of the emperor and his court in favor of the Jews. The Romans had come to regard the Jews, as the Scriptures declare them to have been, "a stiff-necked and rebellious people," and naturally had concluded that the cause of this rebellious disposition lay somehow or other in their religion. This was a true supposition; it is undoubtedly a fact that the truths of divine revelation tend to produce a spirit of liberty wherever they are applied—breaking down the wide distinctions as between priests and people, kings and [E352] subjects, teaching that all are amenable to one great Judge and King. But Josephus wished to counteract this correct estimate of the Jewish people, and the Jewish religion; and hence he stretched the truth in his endeavor to make out a case, and to show the Roman court that the Jews' religion was practically the same as the various heathen religions, (1) in

respect to consciousness of the dead, and (2) a belief in eternal torment.* To make out his case, he cites the sect of the Essenes, as though they were the chief religious sect amongst the Jews. On the contrary, they were so insignificant that they are not so much as mentioned in the New Testament, and evidently never came in conflict with either the Lord or the apostles, whereas the Pharisees and the Sadducees are continually and frequently referred to.

*Eternal torment never was the Jewish belief except of the very few; but the Roman Emperors favored this theory, for it increased the imperial influence over the common people. Later the Emperors adopted the title, "Pontifex Maximus," chief religious ruler—later still adopted by Papacy for the popes.

"All Live unto Him"—[Luke 20:37,38](#)

It was after our Lord had answered the doctors of the law and the scribes and Pharisees, and had discomfited them, that the Sadducees put in an appearance, thinking that they could show the superiority of their infidel position, by refuting our Lord's doctrines. To these Sadducees, who claimed that the dead were forever dead, our Lord said, "And now that the dead are [to be] raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and 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***

Our Lord suggests that this of itself is a proof "that the dead are [to be] raised," because God would surely not refer thus to beings totally and forever blotted out of existence. He then shows that God's plan for a resurrection is fixed, **[E353]** and that those whom men call "dead" "all live unto Him"—from God's standpoint they only "sleep." God's Word, therefore, speaks of these as "asleep" and not as destroyed. Though the original sentence was to destruction it is now offset by the ransom. So Moses says: "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest [in resurrection], Return, ye children of men." ([Psa. 90:3; 103:4](#)) In saying, "I am the God of Abraham," God speaks not only of things past as still present, but also of things to come as if already come to pass. [Rom. 4:17](#)

The Body, Spirit and **Soul** of the Church

—[1 Thess. 5:23](#)—

The terms body, **soul** and spirit are figuratively used of the Church collectively. For instance, the Apostle says: "I pray God [that] your whole spirit, **soul** and body be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This prayer must be understood to apply to the Church as a

whole—the elect Church whose names are written in heaven. The true *spirit* has been preserved in the little flock. Its body is discernible today, also, notwithstanding the multitude of tares that would hide as well as choke it. And its *soul*, its activity, its intelligence, its sentient being, is in evidence everywhere, lifting up the standard for the people—the cross, the ransom.

In no other way could we apply the Apostle's words; for, however much people may differ respecting the preservation of the individual spirits and *souls* of the people addressed, all will agree that their *bodies have not been preserved*, but have returned to dust, like those of others. Besides, the words body, *soul* and spirit are in the singular, not in the plural.

What Is Signified by "Sheol" or "Hades" to Which All *Souls* Go?

It is held that since *souls* are said to go to *sheol, hades*, [E354] therefore the *soul* of man must be something tangible and conscious after dissolution—after the separation of the spirit of life from the organism or body. It is therefore proper that we examine the Word of the Lord on this line, and see—What is *sheol, hades* ?

The Hebrew word *sheol* occurs sixty-five times in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is three times translated *pit*, thirty-one times translated *grave*, and thirty-one times translated *hell*. These are all faulty translations, if measured by the present general use of the words, hell, grave and pit.

The meaning of the Hebrew word *sheol* (*hades* is its Greek equivalent) can scarcely be expressed by any one English word: it signifies *hidden* or *extinguished*, or *obscure*—the condition or state of death: it is not a place but a condition, and perhaps the word *oblivion* would more nearly than any other in our language correspond with the word *sheol* of the Hebrew and *hades* of the Greek. Nothing in the word *sheol* signifies joy or misery, or any feeling; the connections must guide us in this. Let us therefore examine uses of the words *sheol* and *hades* and ascertain from the connection all we can respecting "hell." We will find it clearly stated in the Scriptures that *sheol, hades, oblivion*, receives all mankind, good and bad alike; that it has no light, no knowledge, no wisdom, no device; that no tongue there praises the Lord, neither blasphemes his name; that it is a condition of absolute silence, and in every way an undesirable condition, except that it has attached to it a hope of resurrection.

It will be noticed also that it is "*souls*," both good and bad, that go to this condition—*sheol, oblivion*—to await the summons of the Life-giver in the morning of the Millennial age. It cannot be denied that the translators of our Common Version English Bible have been at times inconsistent, but we urge

that this be not charged wholly to dishonesty, even though in many instances it may appear to be little short of this: rather let us believe that it was the result of a confusion of mind on this subject, superinduced by long centuries of false teaching, handed down from the "dark [E355] ages." Another thing that can be said in extenuation of the work of the translators is, that in the "old English" the word *hell* had no such meaning as it has in modern English language. It, in no sense of the word, signified or implied a place of flames or torture or trouble or pain, but more the thought of grave—hidden condition, *oblivion*. The translators in using the word *hell* probably partially justified themselves, on the ground of its ancient significance, its primary meaning, as given in unabridged English dictionaries.

In examining the following occurrences of the word *sheol*, the reader is urged to note what would be the sense of the passage, if the word *sheol* were translated in each case "hell fire," or "place of torment," and then also to note how, in every instance, the translation would be thoroughly smooth and consistent with the context if it were translated *oblivion*. These prove conclusively that "souls" go to *sheol*, *oblivion*, and that they are not in torment there, nor have they any knowledge or wisdom or work or joy or pain or feeling of any kind, but simply wait in *oblivion* for "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God."

"I will go down *into the grave* [into *sheol*, into *oblivion*] unto my son, mourning." [Gen. 37:35](#)

Thus did Jacob mourn for his son Joseph, whom he supposed had died a violent death.

"If mischief shall befall him [Benjamin] by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to *the grave* [to *sheol*, to *oblivion*]." [Gen. 42:38](#)

These were the words of Jacob, when parting with Benjamin, and fearful lest he should be killed, as he supposed Joseph had been.

The same words identically are repeated under similar circumstances, in **chapter 44:29**, when the brethren of Joseph are relating to him the parting injunction of their father respecting Benjamin. And in the **31st verse** the [E356] brethren again state the matter as for themselves, saying, "Thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father to *the grave* [to *sheol*, to *oblivion*]."

Here are four instances in which the word *sheol* has been translated "grave," and we invite all to consider how inappropriate it would have been to have used the word *hell*, attaching to it the usual, ordinary thought of fire, torment and anguish. The translators were evidently quite positive that the word *hell*,

as ordinarily understood, would give very false ideas of the expectation of Jacob for himself, and of his sons respecting him: hence they here translated the word "grave." Nevertheless, they did not believe, nor do the majority of people believe, that Jacob went into the grave, or had any thought of going into the grave. Nor was the patriarch thinking of the burial of his body in a tomb, for then doubtless he would have used the same Hebrew word for grave which he used in speaking of Rachel's grave, viz., *qeburah* ([Gen. 35:20](#)), or else he would have used the same word which his son Joseph used (*qeber*), when speaking of Jacob's grave, which Jacob himself had already caused to be prepared before he died. ([Gen. 50:5](#)) On the contrary, we see that Jacob was speaking about *himself*, as a **soul** or being—that the disappointment of the loss of Benjamin would bring *him* down to *oblivion*, to the state of death, in his now old age and feeble health.

"If the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up...and they go down quick *into the pit* [into *sheol*, into *oblivion*]." [Num. 16:30](#)

"They...went down alive *into the pit* [*sheol*, *oblivion*], and the earth closed upon them and they perished from amongst the congregation." [Num. 16:33](#)

These two texts referring to Korah, Dathan and Abiram, showing how they were destroyed, could not have been consistently translated "into *hell*," for fear of proving that the claimed place of torture is under the surface of this earth. But how simple the statement when rightly understood: the [E357] earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up and they went down from the midst of life's activities into oblivion, unconsciousness.

"A fire is kindled of mine anger, and shall burn unto *the lowest hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*], and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." [Deut. 32:22](#)

Here certainly is a mention of fire, but not of literal fire. The entire context shows that it is the fire of God's jealousy, and the statement follows, "They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and bitter destruction...the sword without and terror within shall destroy." We are not left to conjecture respecting how this prophecy was fulfilled; for the Apostle Paul, speaking under the inspiration of the holy Spirit, refers to this passage, and applies it to fleshly Israel, and to the trouble which came upon them as a nation, when they rejected the Lord Jesus, and in turn were themselves rejected of the Lord. The Apostle declares that wrath came upon them to the uttermost ([1 Thess. 2:16](#)): divine anger burned against them and did continue to burn against them until, as a people, they had suffered for their national sins. After divine wrath has burned out their national transgression, even

searching them out to the very lowest oblivion (*sheol*) he will then speak peaceably toward them, saying to the Church, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sins." ([Isa. 40:1,2](#)) Then also shall come the deliverance of Jacob predicted by the Apostle Paul, on the strength of the divine statement, "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." ([Rom. 11:26,27](#)) The same thought that this burning of divine wrath against Israel, to the very lowest oblivion, will be followed by divine blessing, is shown in the context. See [Deut. 32:26-43](#).

"The Lord killeth and maketh alive: he bringeth down to **[E358]** *the grave* [to *sheol*, to *oblivion*], and bringeth up [by a resurrection out of *oblivion*, out of *sheol*]." [1 Sam. 2:6](#)

"The sorrows of *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] compassed me about." [2 Sam. 22:6](#)

The prophet David here expressed the fact that his life was in jeopardy, but that God delivered him from the hand of Saul. The context, however, shows quite clearly that the Psalmist speaks prophetically of the Christ, and the time of the full deliverance of the body of Christ, which is the Church, from the present evil world, into the glories of the world to come, showing ([verses 8-18](#)) that the deliverance of the body of Christ would be just before a great time of trouble, and manifestation of divine power and indignation against wickedness.

"Let not his hoar head go down to *the grave*[*sheol*, *oblivion*] in peace...but his hoar head bring thou down to *the grave* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] with blood." [1 Kings 2:6,9](#)

David was the speaker, pointing out to Solomon his son that Joab was a dangerous man, a man of blood, justly deserving of some retribution before he died. The translators evidently thought that, although Joab was a bad man, it would not do here to translate the word *sheol* by the word *hell*, because the context speaks of gray hairs, while their theory asserts that the hairs and all the remainder of the physical body are buried, and that the naked **soul** or spirit goes to hell. Hence they preferred here to render *sheol* by the English word *grave*. But with the proper thought in mind, there is no difficulty about having Joab's gray hairs and also Jacob's gray hairs go down into *sheol*, oblivion, the state of death, together. The words "gray hairs" and "hoar head" are simply figures of speech signifying aged.

"As a cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to *the grave*[*sheol*, *oblivion*] shall come up no more." [Job 7:9](#)

Job here points out the utter destruction of man's **soul**, or [E359] being, in death. Nevertheless in *verse 21* he concludes the argument with the declaration, "I shall sleep and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." Here the interim of death is referred to as a sleep, as the Millennial age is referred to as the morning, and the present age as the night of weeping and trouble, dying and crying. The Lord will seek Job in the morning, in resurrection power, and though he shall not be, though death shall have worked utter destruction, nevertheless the case is not beyond divine power, and hence, when the Lord's time shall come "he shall have a desire unto the work of his hands," when the day of the Lord's vengeance shall have passed, and the times of refreshing shall have come—then he shall call, and Job and all others will answer him. See *Chap. 14:14,15*.

"It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*]; what canst thou know?" [Job 11:8](#)

These words are by Zophar, one of Job's mistaken comforters, whom the Lord reproveth. By this statement he is attempting to show Job that the divine principles of government are inscrutable to humanity: as an illustration of man's utter lack of knowledge of God he refers to *sheol*, and compares the two; as there is no knowledge in *sheol*, equally, he claims, there can be no knowledge of the divine wisdom and plan.

"O that thou wouldst hide me in *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*], that thou wouldst keep me in secret until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me." [Job 14:13](#)

Here is the most simple and most explicit statement of Job's hope. He was not anxious for a perpetuation of the present conditions of sin and sorrow and trouble and pain; he was quite willing to be hidden in oblivion until the time when the curse, "wrath," shall be lifted from the earth, and the times of refreshing instead shall come. But he does not wish to be blotted out forever. Oh no! having confidence in the divine provision for a future life, through a resurrection, [E360] he prays that God in due time, after the curse of sin has been rolled away, will remember him, and call him out of oblivion into being again, by the restitution powers then to be exercised through the Christ. See [Acts 3:19-21](#).

"If I wait, *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*] is my house: I shall make my bed in the darkness. I have cried to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister." [Job 17:13,14](#)

How expressive this language! Oblivion is the house or is the bed, and it is full of darkness—Job's **soul**, his being, sleeps, is inanimate, waiting for the morning of the resurrection, while his body turns to corruption.

"Where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to *the bars of the pit* [to *sheol*, *oblivion*, separately]. Truly in the dust alone there is rest for all." [Job 17:15,16](#)

The servant of God expresses his own hope or confidence, but questions how many can have such a confidence. He has already expressed the hope that his death will be merely a sleep, from which he shall awake in the morning. But although each separately goes down to *sheol*, to oblivion, whether they have this hope or not, all find rest in the dust.

"They spend their days in wealth and in a moment go down into *the grave* [*sheol*, *oblivion*]." [Job 21:13](#)

Job is here describing the prosperous course of some who are not the Lord's people—contrasting the same with the tribulations experienced by some who are the Lord's people, and come under the rod of divine correction, to fit and prepare them for better things hereafter.

"Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth *the grave* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] those which have sinned." [Job 24:19](#)

All mankind has sinned, and hence all mankind is subject to death, and goes down to oblivion. The only hope is in him who redeemed us from death, and who, "in the[E361] morning," will bring us out of oblivion, according to his own gracious promise. Job, however, in this instance is specially referring to evildoers, who hasten their death by an evil course.

"*Hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." [Job 26:6](#)

Here Job points out the all-wisdom of the Creator, who not only knows the end from the beginning, but every secret thing of oblivion is open to his inscrutable gaze.

"For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in *the grave* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] who shall give thee thanks?" [Psa. 6:5](#)

What a clear, positive statement we have here, proving the unconsciousness of man in death! It should be noticed also that the statement is not with reference to the wicked, but with reference to God's servants who desire to thank and to praise him for his mercies. Note also that the reference is not to the dead *flesh* which is buried in *qeber*, but to the **soul** which goes to *sheol*, oblivion.

"The wicked shall be [re-] turned into *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] and all nations that forget God." [Psa. 9:17](#)

The Hebrew word *shub* in this text is properly translated "returned." This gives the thought of one recovered from *sheol*, oblivion, and that some thus recovered will be returned to oblivion on account of wickedness and forgetfulness of God. The deliverance of mankind in general from *sheol* will occur during the Millennial age, as a result of the ransom price finished at Calvary. However, those once awakened and brought to a knowledge of the truth, who then are wilfully perverse, will be returned again to oblivion—"the Second Death," from which there is to be no ransom and no restitution. That this passage is not applicable to the masses of mankind (the heathen) who have never known God, is very evident—from its own statement it refers to those who *forget* God after they have been brought to clear knowledge of him, and to corresponding responsibility.

[E362]

"Thou wilt not leave my **soul** in *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." [*Psa. 16:10*](#)

The Apostle Peter, speaking on the day of Pentecost, under the plenary influence of the holy Spirit, expounds to us the true significance of this statement, pointing out that it could not possibly be true of David himself; because David's **soul** was left in *sheol*, and his flesh did see corruption. He declares of David, "He is both *dead* and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day." "David is not ascended into the heavens." [*Acts 2:27-34*](#)

The Apostle's words are emphatic and thoroughly convincing on two points, (1) that the **soul** of David went to *sheol*, oblivion, and still remained there and up to the time of Peter's discourse had not gone to heaven; (2) that the **soul** of Christ Jesus went to *sheol*, oblivion, also, but did not remain because resurrected the third day—and subsequently ascended to heaven.

These plain statements from an inspired source should clarify this subject to all genuine truth seekers. They set before us the following facts: (1) The **soul** (being) of our Lord Jesus went to oblivion, to *sheol*, at death. (2) He was dead parts of three days. (3) He arose, was quickened, brought out of oblivion, to the divine nature, on the third day, by the power of the holy Spirit of God, and became "the first fruits of them that *slept*." Our Lord's being or **soul** was non-existent during the period of death: "He poured out his **soul** unto death; he made his **soul** an offering for sin." But his **soul**[being] was revived in resurrection, being granted a new spiritual body.*

*Vol. II, p. 109.

"The bonds of *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] encircled me: the snares of death seized on me."—[Psa. 18:5](#)—*Leeser*.

A figurative expression of deep anguish and fear of death.

"O Lord, thou hast brought up my **soul** from *the grave* [E363] [*sheol, oblivion*]; thou hast kept me alive." [Psa. 30:3](#)

This is a thanksgiving for recovery from severe illness, which threatened death.

"Let the wicked be ashamed, let them be silent in *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]; let the lying lips be put to silence." [Psa. 31:17,18](#)

Here, as elsewhere, the Psalmist longs for the cleansing of the earth from those who love and practice wickedness. This has no reference whatever to a future life, nor does it imply a hope of resurrection. When the Kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor amongst the nations, and the laws of righteousness and truth are established, and when mercy and love shall bring to every creature fullest opportunity of knowledge and recovery from sin, it may be that some who are now wicked will seek righteousness, seek justice, and be hidden under the mercy of Christ's righteousness, and eventually attain to eternal life through him. Neither the prophet David nor any one else could offer objections to such a reformation, nor to the giving of eternal life to those thoroughly reformed and brought back to harmony with God.

"Like sheep they are laid in *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]; death shall feed upon them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their strength shall consume, *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*] being an habitation to every one of them. But God will redeem my **soul** from the power of *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]." [Psa. 49:14,15](#)

That *sheol* does not signify grave in the ordinary sense, but as we translate it, oblivion, is clearly manifested from this text; for sheep are not buried in graves, though all sheep go into oblivion, are forgotten, are as though they had not been. The Prophet is here pointing out his own confidence in the resurrection, that God would redeem his **soul** from *sheol*, oblivion. This is in full harmony with the Apostle Peter's statement that "David is not ascended into the heavens." David's **soul** went to *sheol*, to oblivion, and [E364] David's only hope is in the redemption of his **soul** from *sheol*, from oblivion, to life, by the Redeemer in the resurrection. Moreover, even those who go into oblivion like the sheep are to come out of oblivion again, for this passage distinctly declares that "in the morning" of the resurrection, the Millennial morning, the righteous shall "have dominion" over these, shall rule them, shall control them, shall judge them in righteousness. So also saith the Apostle, "The saints shall judge the world." [1 Cor. 6:2](#)

"Let death seize them, and let them go down quick into *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*]: for wickedness is in their dwellings." [Psa. 55:15](#)

This scripture, as ordinarily misunderstood, has been a great stumbling block to many of God's people. They have said, how could it be that a good man like David should pray for his enemies to go down into *hell*—into everlasting torture. A good man would not so pray, nor was this the tenor of David's prayer. As we have seen, and are seeing, the word *sheol* contains no thought whatever of fire or blaze or torment or anything of the kind, but simply signifies oblivion, the extinguishment of life. It follows, then that David's prayer or desire for his enemies, the opponents of righteousness, was a perfectly proper desire, in fullest harmony with the laws of the most civilized peoples in this day of greatest enlightenment. Today the laws of civilized nations declare that all murderers shall be executed, and they generally stipulate the supposedly easiest and least painful methods of execution. The law is thus saying, as did David, Let these culprits go to *sheol*, oblivion—let them die. Nevertheless, God in his mercy, has redeemed, by the precious blood of Christ, the vilest sinner as well as the least vile, for "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." If some of our fellow-creatures are more perverse than ourselves, it may, for aught we know to the contrary, be because of the specially blinding influences of the Adversary upon them ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)); or because of a more evil heredity.[E365] In any case, God's provision is that each individual of the race shall have a full, fair, impartial opportunity of deciding his *choice* for righteousness and life, or for unrighteousness and the Second Death—to be returned to *sheol*. All this is fully guaranteed to us in the New Covenant secured and sealed to us through the merit of the precious blood of Christ.

"Great is thy mercy toward me: thou hast delivered my **soul** from the lowest *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*]." [Psa. 86:13](#)

The words "lowest hell" here would signify depth of oblivion. We may not improperly consider that the Prophet is here personating the Lord Jesus, as he does in many of his Psalms. If so, the words "depth of oblivion" would have a peculiar applicability. In the case of the world of mankind death is but a sleep, and its oblivion but a temporary one, from which there shall come an awakening in the resurrection, as a result of the redemption. But in the case of our Lord Jesus it was different: inasmuch as he took the place of the sinner (Adam), death to him must have meant the extreme penalty of sin, viz., a perpetual oblivion, except as, by the Father's grace and power, he should be raised from the dead, and become the Deliverer of those whom he redeemed.

"My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]." [Psa. 88:3](#)

Here, again, sorrow nigh unto death is briefly and poetically described.

"What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand [power] of *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]?" [Psa. 89:48](#)

How consistent this inquiry and its implied answer, with all the facts of the case as we have thus far seen them, and how inharmonious are these words with the common thought upon the subject discussed! The common thought is that no man, no soul, experiences death; that the moment of dying is the moment of an increase of life; hence that the soul is quite superior to the powers of *sheol*, oblivion—that [E366] the soul cannot die: so far from it being a question whether it could deliver itself from the power of *sheol*, it passes unquestioned that *sheol* has no power whatever to touch the soul. How consistent the Scriptures and the truth! How inconsistent the commonly accepted Platonic philosophy!

"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow." [Psa. 116:3](#)

Here, again, fear of death is graphically portrayed.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit [power—to escape or be hidden from divine power], or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] behold, thou art there." [Psa. 139:7,8](#)

According to the prevalent idea, this would mean that God is a permanent resident of the awful torture chamber which *sheol* is represented to be. On the contrary, the Prophet is taking a large view of the divine power, and telling us the result of his researches, that there is no place in all the universe that is not accessible to divine power. Even the oblivion of death is subject to our Lord who declares, "I have the keys of death and of *hades* [oblivion]." It is our confidence in God—in his omnipotence—that constitutes the basis of our faith in a resurrection of the dead.

"Our bones are scattered at *the grave's* [*sheol, oblivion*] mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth upon the earth." [Psa. 141:7](#)

The significance of this passage is very obscure, but in any event, it has nothing in it favorable to the common idea of a hell of torment. Young's translation renders this verse—"As one tilling and ripping up the land, have our bones been scattered at the command of Saul."

"Let us swallow them up alive, as *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]." [Prov. 1:12](#)

This purports to be the language of murderers, who would destroy their victims quickly, and have them lost from sight and from memory—in oblivion.

[E367]

"Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*]." [Prov. 5:5](#)

Here the temptations of an evil woman, and their baneful results, are poetically set forth: her ways lead to destruction, to death, to oblivion.

"Her house is the way to *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*], going down to the chambers of death." [Prov. 7:27](#)

A similar expression to the one preceding, but giving evidence that the hell referred to is not ablaze; not a place of torment, but the dark chambers of death, nonentity, oblivion.

"Her guests are in the depths of *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*]." [Prov. 9:18](#)

Here, in hyperbolic language, the harlot's guests are represented as dead, as having lost self-respect, and all the dignity of manhood—undoubtedly they are in the way of death, for the way of licentiousness hastens disease and death. They are in the way of oblivion, not only in the physical sense, but also in the sense of losing their respect and influence amongst men.

"*Hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] and destruction are before the Lord: how much more, then, the hearts of the children of men?" [Prov. 15:11](#)

It should be noted that there is no intimation here of torture, but quite the reverse, *sheol*, oblivion, is associated with destruction.

"The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*] beneath." [Prov. 15:24](#)

Our translators have very nearly made this text favor their theory that the righteous go *upto* heaven, and the unrighteous go *down* to hell. Notice the Revised Version's rendering—"To the wise the way of life goeth upward that he may depart from *sheol* [margin, the grave] beneath." The correct thought might properly be rendered thus—The path of life for the wise is an upward one toward righteousness, that they may be delivered by resurrection power from oblivion.

"Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his **soul** from *hell* [*sheol*, *oblivion*]." [Prov. 23:14](#)

[E368]

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to explain that this passage does not teach that after death the corpse should be beaten, in order that the **soul** might be gotten out of a hell of torment. The meaning is clearly indicated by the context. The injunction is that the child shall not be spared the rod, if it needs it, for in so doing years of usefulness may be added to its life—its **soul** (being) shall be kept back from a premature oblivion, and possibly be saved from the Second Death—from being returned to oblivion.

"Hell [*sheol, oblivion*] and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied." [Prov. 27:20](#)

So far from this signifying a burning hell, of so immense proportions that it never can be filled, it merely signifies that there is no limit to the capacity of death—oblivion and destruction cannot be overcrowded.

"There are three things that are never satisfied; yea, four things say not, It is enough: *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]; the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water, and the fire that saith not, It is enough." [Prov. 30:15,16](#)

In this text, as in the one preceding it, death, oblivion, is said to have no end of capacity, and cannot be over-filled.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*] whither thou goest." [Eccl. 9:10](#)

Here is a most positive statement respecting hell, *sheol*, oblivion. It is applicable not merely to the wicked, but also to the righteous—to all who enter death. There is neither good work nor bad work, neither praising God nor cursing God, neither thinking good nor thinking ill, neither holy knowledge nor unholy knowledge, neither heavenly wisdom nor other wisdom, in *sheol*, in the oblivion of death. How could the matter be more clearly or more emphatically stated?

"Jealousy is cruel as *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]." [Sol. Song, 8:6](#)

[E369]

Here the death state, oblivion, is represented as the very personification of relentlessness. It swallows up the entire human family, making no exceptions, either of character or condition.

"Therefore *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure." [Isa. 5:14](#)

The Prophet here uses the word *sheol*, oblivion, to describe the loss of prestige, the ignominy, the dishonor upon Israel. They had become as though

dead, they had passed into oblivion in large numbers. The passage has no reference to a literal grave, nor to a lake of fire.

"Hell [*sheol, oblivion*] from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming." [Isa. 14:9](#)

This is highly symbolic language. It is applied to Babylon. Its fulfilment, we believe, is still future, and is now close at hand. Great Babylon is to be swallowed up; as a stone cast into the sea, it shall be utterly lost sight of and forgotten—it will go to oblivion, *sheol*. ([Rev. 18:21](#)) This is shown by the context, which declares, "How hath the oppressor ceased, the golden city ceased!" See *verses 4-8*.

"Thy pomp is brought down to *the grave*[*sheol, oblivion*]." [Isa. 14:11](#)

This is a continuation of the same symbolical picture of the *destruction* of mystic Babylon, whose greatness will soon be a thing of the past—buried in oblivion, not in a burning hell.

"Ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] are we at agreement." [Isa. 28:15](#)

Here the Lord predicts direful trouble, stumbling, and falling amongst those who, through false doctrines, have come to disregard the Scriptural teaching that death is the wages of sin. This time of retribution upon those who have handled the Word of God deceitfully, and who, instead of being sanctified by the truth, are preferring the error, is near at hand. Our great adversary, Satan, is taking advantage of the prevalent misbelief on this subject to ensnare the [E370] world with various false doctrines presented upon this false premise. Already he has misled the Papists and the entire heathen world into prayers and masses for the dead, who are believed to be not dead, but very much alive in the torments of purgatory. And now, through Spiritualism, Theosophy and Christian Science, the same Adversary is making special attacks upon Protestants, who because of their belief that the dead are not dead, are very susceptible to these deceiving influences.

Christians of various denominations have "made a league with death," and declare that it is a friend, whereas the Scriptures declare that it is man's greatest enemy, and the wages of his sin. With the grave nominal Christians are in agreement; they consider it to be nothing but a storehouse for the earthly body, which they declare themselves well rid of. Failing to see that death (oblivion) is the wages of sin, they are ready to believe Satan's falsehood, that eternal torment is the wages of sin. Failing to believe that death is the wages of sin, they are ready to deny that the death of Christ was the remedy, the corresponding price, for man's release, and thus all the gracious features of the

divine plan of the ransom and restitution are *more or less obscured* from their view, and made difficult of apprehension.

"Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with *hell*[*sheol, oblivion*] shall not stand." [*Isa. 28:18*](#)

Thus the Lord declares that he will ultimately convince the world of the truth of the Scripture statements respecting death and the oblivion condition; but it shall be through a great time of trouble and confusion to those who are under this deception, and who refuse to hearken to the voice of the Word of the Lord on this subject.

"I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]. I am deprived of the residue of my years." [*Isa. 38:10*](#)

These are the words of Hezekiah, the good king of Judah, [E371] on whose behalf a miracle was wrought, prolonging his days. In these words he is telling what were his thoughts at the time of his sickness. He certainly did not mean that he expected to have gone down to a hell of eternal torment, and the translators were wise enough to see that if in this instance they had translated *sheol* with the word *hell*, it would have aroused questionings and investigations on the part of the readers, which would the sooner have brought the truth on this subject to general attention. The king simply declares that he felt himself near to death, to oblivion, and that he was about to be deprived of the residue of his days, that he might reasonably have expected to enjoy.

"*The grave* [*sheol, oblivion*] cannot praise thee: death cannot celebrate thee." [*Isa. 38:18*](#)

These are the words of Hezekiah, a part of the same description of his sickness, his fear of death, his record of the Lord's goodness and mercy in prolonging his life, and his thanksgiving to the Lord. He declares, "Thou hast in love of my *soul* [being] delivered it from the pit of corruption." The translators did not render this, "Hell cannot praise thee," else those of inquiring mind would have been asking what kind of a hell would be referred to. Hezekiah associates the thought of death, with oblivion, *sheol*, and uses them synonymously, and then he declares, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." In other words, a living man can praise the Lord, but if a man be dead, if his *soul* be gone to *sheol*, to oblivion, he cannot praise the Lord, nor in any sense recount his mercies—until, in the morning of the resurrection, as Job declares, the Lord will call, and all will answer him.

"Thou wentest to the king with ointment...and didst debase thyself even unto *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*]." [*Isa. 57:9*](#)

This is a figurative expression. It does not refer to a hell of torment, nor to a literal grave. It represents Israel as a woman, negligent of her husband, the Lord, seeking alliance [E372] with the kings of the earth, to oblivion—to the extent of becoming figuratively dead, oblivious to the Lord and to the principles of his truth and the righteousness which is of faith.

"In the day when he went down to *the grave*, [*sheol, oblivion*] I caused a mourning....I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*]...they also went down into *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] unto them that were slain with the sword." [Ezek. 31:15-17](#)

Here the Lord, through the Prophet, is in figurative language describing the fall of Babylon. As heretofore seen, the fall of Babylon, and the extravagant descriptions of it, were in part applicable to literal Babylon, and in greater part are yet to be applied in the complete fall and collapse of mystic Babylon. The old-time nation of Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians, and went down into oblivion, into the death state as a nation: modern mystic Babylon is similarly to fall into oblivion, to rise no more.

"The strong among the mighty shall speak to him, and them that help him, out of the midst of *hell*, [*sheol, oblivion*]." [Ezek. 32:21](#)

Here the passing of the nation of Egypt into oblivion, and the other strong nations which went down into oblivion prior to the fall of Egypt, are represented as speaking to Egypt in respect to its fall. Thus we say that history *tells us* certain things—that history repeats her lessons.

"They shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised which are gone down to *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] with their weapons of war." [Ezek. 32:27](#)

The Prophet is here foretelling the destruction of Meshech and Tubal, how they also will go down to oblivion with their weapons of war. The weapons of war can, indeed, go down into oblivion, and we thank the Lord that no provision has been made for their restoration, in the glorious age that is to come, when Emmanuel shall have established[E373] his Kingdom, for the positive promise is, "He shall make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." [Psa. 46:9](#)

"I will ransom them from the power of *the grave* [*sheol, oblivion*]; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues, O *grave* [*sheol, oblivion*] I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from my eyes." [Hos. 13:14](#)

Whoever has not already been convinced that *sheol* does not signify a place of torture can at least take comfort from this text, in which the Lord declares

unqualifiedly that *sheol shall be destroyed*. If, therefore, anyone still believes and contends that it is a place of torture, let him also at least admit that it will not endure to all eternity, because the Lord himself has decreed its destruction.

But how beautifully clear and harmonious is this entire statement from the true standpoint! The ransom price has already been paid by our dear Redeemer, and the work of delivering mankind from *sheol*, from the oblivion of death, merely waits until the Church, the Body of Christ, has been selected from amongst mankind, and glorified with her Lord and Head, Christ Jesus. As soon as the resurrection of the Church is complete (the chief or first resurrection) *then*, declares the Apostle, "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" [1 Cor. 15:54,55](#)

The swallowing up of death in victory will be the work of the Millennial age, and a gradual one, just as the swallowing up of mankind by death has been a gradual one. Eventually the death sentence which now rests upon mankind, and *sheol*, the oblivion which it enforces upon mankind, shall completely pass away, because all have been redeemed from its power. Under the new conditions, under the New Covenant, with its abundant provision, no one shall enter death (oblivion) again, except such as will be intentional sinners on their own behalf. This will be the Second Death, from which there will be no hope of recovery.

[E374]

"Though they dig into *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] thence shall my hand [power] take them." [Amos 9:2](#)

In this strongly figurative language the Lord declares the completeness of his power and control over mankind, referring in particular to Israel. As a nation, no more than as individuals, could they escape from the divine judgments, and though they should go down into death, individually and nationally, still all of God's promises, and threats as well, shall be fulfilled. Nevertheless, after declaring their utter overthrow and scattering amongst all nations of earth, as we see it fulfilled today, the Lord's promise is ([verses 11-15](#)), "In that day [in the dawning of the Millennial day] I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen...and I will bring again the captivity of my people, Israel...and they shall no more be pulled out of the land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." None would think of digging his way into a place of eternal torment; but Israel as a nation did dig its way toward national oblivion. Yet God shall prevent this.

"Out of the belly of *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*] cried I, and thou heardest my voice." [Jonah 2:2](#)

The belly of hell, in which Jonah was, and from which he cried to the Lord, and from which he was delivered, was the belly of the great fish which had swallowed him. It was the belly of oblivion, destruction, death, to him, had he not been delivered from it.

"Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as *hell* [*sheol, oblivion*], and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people." [*Hab. 2:5*](#)

Here, apparently, an ambitious nation is referred to, an aggressive nation. It might be very fitly applied to the nations of the present time, which are scouring the world to bring smaller and less civilized nations under their control [E375] and patronage. Or it might refer to the Man of Sin, and his world-wide influence, through which he draws his revenues from all nations under the sun. In any case, the thought is that covetousness is like death (oblivion), in that it never has enough; its capacity cannot be satisfied.

"Hades" in the New Testament

In the New Testament the Greek word *hades* is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew word *sheol*. We have the most absolute proof of this from the fact that the apostles, in quotations from the Old Testament, render *sheol* by the word *hades*. The following are all the instances in the New Testament in which the word *hades* occurs:

"Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to *hell* [*hades, oblivion*]." [*Matt. 11:23*](#)

It certainly was not true that the city of Capernaum went into eternal torment, neither was it true that it went into a grave, in the ordinary sense of that word, but it was most absolutely true that Capernaum did go into oblivion, into destruction.

"I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of *hell* [*hades, oblivion*] shall not prevail against it." [*Matt. 16:18*](#)

Peter had just made confession of the Lord Jesus as being the Anointed, the Son of the living God, the Messiah. This truth is the mighty rock upon which the entire Church of Christ, as living stones, must be built, for there is no other name given whereby we must be saved. Our Lord declares Peter to be one of these *living stones*, and Peter declares ([*1 Pet. 2:5*](#)), that all consecrated believers are similarly *living stones*, built upon this great foundation rock, Christ, the Anointed. These living stones are being built up for a habitation of God, through the spirit, to be a glorious temple for his indwelling, and through which he will bless all the families [E376] of the earth. Notwithstanding this

fact, that God has accepted believers in Christ and is counting them as members of this future temple, he is permitting death to prevail against his people now: they go down into death (oblivion), apparently as do others: they therefore have need of the Lord's encouraging assurance that death shall not prevail against them, that the doors of oblivion shall not forever remain closed; that as he symbolically burst the bars of death, and came forth in resurrection through the Father's power, so also his Church shall be delivered from the power of death—from oblivion, and shall have share in his resurrection, "the first resurrection." Surely this is in harmony with all Scriptural testimony, and surely no other interpretation of our Lord's words would make the least sense.

"Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to *hell* [*hades, oblivion*]." [Luke 10:15](#)

Capernaum was highly exalted, highly privileged, in that it had our Lord as a resident for some time, enjoyed the privileges of his teaching, and witnessed many of his mighty works; and this hyperbolically is termed *exaltation to heaven*. But in consequence of a failure to rightly use these high privileges and opportunities, our Lord declares that the city would suffer corresponding depression, overthrow, death, as a city—be cast down to oblivion. And this has been fulfilled.

"In *hell* [*hades, oblivion*] he lifted up his eyes being in torments." [Luke 16:23](#)

This is the only passage of the Scriptures in which there is the slightest intimation of the possibility of thought, feeling, torture or happiness in *hades* or *sheol*. At first it seems to be opposed to the declaration that there is no work, nor knowledge, nor device in *sheol*, and it can only be understood from the one standpoint, viz., that it is a parable. Elsewhere we discuss it in its details,* and show that the rich man who went into oblivion, and yet was tortured [E377] while in oblivion, is the Jewish nation. Israel certainly has gone into oblivion; as a nation it is dead, yet as a people scattered amongst all the nations, Israel lives and has suffered torments since the rejection of Messiah, and will so continue to do until having filled her measure of tribulation she shall be restored to divine favor, according to the conditions of the divine covenant. [Rom. 11:26-29](#)

*See "What Say the Scriptures About Hell?" Address the publishers.

"Thou wilt not leave my **soul** in *hell* [*hades, oblivion*]." [Acts 2:27](#)

This is the quotation from the Psalms with which we started our present examination—to ascertain whether it is the **soul**, or merely the body, that goes to *hades*, to *sheol*, to oblivion. This text most emphatically teaches that our Lord's **soul** went to *hades*, oblivion, and that it was delivered therefrom by a resurrection. The context proves that David's **soul** also went to *sheol*, but that it has not yet been delivered from *sheol*—nor can it be delivered, according to the divine arrangement, until after all the Church, which is the body of Christ, has first been delivered, and until the first resurrection is complete. See *vss. 29,34; Heb. 11:32,39,40*.

"David, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his **soul** was not left in *hell* [*hades, oblivion*]." *Acts 2:31*

This positive statement is a further confirmation of what we have just seen.

"O death, where is thy sting? O *grave* [*hades, oblivion*] where is thy victory?" *1 Cor. 15:55*

The Apostle gives this as a quotation from the Old Testament, in corroboration of his argument that the only hope for the dead is a resurrection—not in a resurrection of the body, for he distinctly states that the body buried will not be the one resurrected—(see *verses 37,38*): the resurrection hope is for the **soul**, the *being*, regardless of what kind of body God may be pleased to give it. It is not, "If your *body* rise not...your faith is vain," but "If the *dead* rise not...your faith is vain...then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." (*Verses 16-18*) It is that which falls asleep, [E378] not that which turns to corruption, that is to be awakened, resurrected.

"I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of *hell* [*hades, oblivion*] and of death." *Rev. 1:18*

This passage is given as an encouragement to God's people, hence surely *hell, hades*, here cannot mean a place of torment: otherwise, what would be the force of this expression? These words imply that the Lord's people go to *hades* (oblivion), whoever else may go there, and that the hope of the Lord's people, when going down to *hades*, to oblivion, is that in due time our great Redeemer shall unlock this figurative prison-house of death, and bring forth the captives from the tomb, from *sheol, hades*, oblivion. This is the significance of the statement that he has the keys, that is, the power, the authority—he can open and he can shut; all power is given into his hand.

In preaching at his first advent, he quoted the prophecy of Isaiah respecting himself, which declares that he will open the prison-house, and set at liberty the captives, and declared this to be the Gospel. (*Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18*) It is the Gospel of the resurrection, the message, the good tidings of deliverance of all

the captives from the oblivion of death, from the power of the Adversary, "him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil." How full of meaning are these scriptures, when viewed from the proper standpoint; how confusing and absurd when viewed from any other standpoint, except when the ignorance is so dense as to cover and hide the inconsistencies!

"And his name that sat on him was death, and *hell* [*hades, oblivion*] followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." [Rev. 6:8](#)

It would require a very strong imagination to harmonize this statement with the commonly accepted view that *hades* [E379] is a place of torment of such immense size as to be capable of receiving and torturing the fifty thousand millions of the earth's population. Nor could any one see the slightest consistency in using a symbol representing such a place of torment riding on horseback. But the reasonableness of the symbols, death and the state of death, destruction, *oblivion, unconsciousness*, stalking through the earth and sweeping off large proportions of the human family, is entirely consistent. We content ourselves here with merely showing this reasonableness, without offering any explanation of the symbols.

"Death and *hell* [*hades, oblivion*] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged, every man according to their works." [Rev. 20:13](#)

As a result of the first trial in Eden, the death sentence passed upon all men. Probably fifty thousand millions have already gone into *sheol, hades, oblivion*; and hundreds of millions whom we still call alive are not, in the true sense of the word, alive, but are nine-tenths dead, under the operation of the death sentence. As a result of the ransom price paid at Calvary, an opportunity for a new trial is to be granted to each member of the human family; and only a favored minority get such opportunity and trial during this age appointed for the selection of the Church. This means the rolling back of the original sentence of death, and the bringing of all mankind into a condition of judgment or trial for eternal life, on the basis of his own works of obedience or disobedience. This scripture shows us that at the proper time not only will the dead (those under sentence of death, who have not yet gone into the tomb) be granted a full trial or judgment, to determine their worthiness or unworthiness of life everlasting, but also all of those who have gone into *sheol, hades, oblivion*, shall also come forth from unconsciousness, from the sleep of death, to be judged. This scene of judgment is located in the Millennial age, which is the "day of judgment" for the world, as the Gospel age is the day of judgment for the Church.

[E380]

"And death and *hell* [*hades, oblivion*] were cast into the lake of fire—this is the Second Death." [Rev. 20:14](#)

Great confusion must necessarily come to all who would attempt to interpret *hades* as meaning a place of eternal torment, when considering this passage of Scripture, but how reasonable and harmonious it is from the correct standpoint! The lake of fire (*gehenna*) represents utter destruction, the Second Death, which shall utterly destroy all evil things. The "death and *hades*" here pictured as destroyed in the Second Death are the same as we have just described in connection with the preceding *13th verse*. The present state of condemnation, the result of Adam's transgression, is styled "death and *hades*"—the dying condition of those now called the living and the oblivious sleep of the fully dead.

As the *13th verse* declares that all men shall be brought out of these conditions in due time for trial, so this verse declares that Adamic death, and the sleep in oblivion, consequent to it, shall be no more, after the Millennial age; and it explains why, viz., because they shall be merged into or swallowed up by the Second Death condition. In the future no one will die for Adam's sin: it will be out of consideration as a factor in the trial of the future. The only death thereafter will be the Second Death, which will affect only the sinner who commits the sin, not the parents, not the children. In that day he that dies shall die for his own sin. "The **soul** that sinneth it shall die." Although such will have weakness of the Adamic nature from which they will never recover, because of refusal to use the means and opportunities placed within their reach during the Millennium by the Mediator of the New Covenant, yet under that New Covenant those inherited weaknesses will not be reckoned against them, being fully offset by their Redeemer's sacrifice. Hence from and after the time when this full opportunity of the Millennial age is offered to each individual, although Adamic weaknesses and imperfections will still be upon them, their death will not be counted as being a part of Adamic death, but as being a part of the Second[E381] Death—because their failure to make progress will be the result of *their own* wilfulness, and not the result of Adam's transgression, nor of their own heredity to its weaknesses.

We have now examined every text of Scripture containing the words *sheol* and *hades*, and have ascertained that it is the **souls** of men that at death pass into this condition, and that it is a state or condition, and not a place, although sometimes figuratively spoken of as a place, a prison-house, from which all prisoners shall come forth in the resurrection morning. We have found that it is figuratively described as dark, silent, and the statement freely made that there is no knowledge, nor device, nor wisdom, nor work, nor

cursing, nor praise to God on the part of any who enter this state or condition of oblivion. Their only hope is in the Lord—that having redeemed their souls (beings) from destruction by the sacrifice of his own soul, he shall in due time deliver them, call them forth from oblivion, in such bodies as may please him, and to more favorable conditions than the present, when his wrath, the curse, is passed away and the Millennial era of blessing has been ushered in.

It is not surprising that the translators of our Common Version English Bible, and most commentators, being influenced by erroneous views respecting the nature of man, and the time and place of his reward and punishment, and misapprehending his condition in the interim of death, have rendered and glossed certain passages of the Scriptures, in harmony with their misconceptions, which are to some extent stumbling blocks to those seeking the truth. It is proper, therefore, that we consider some of these stumbling blocks, and remove them from our path; but as we must not interrupt our subject proper, these will be left for examination, with other popular misconceptions of Scripture, in our next volume of the SCRIPTURE STUDIES series.