

SHALL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN HEAVEN?

The mystery of life and the ever-present problem of death have alike occasioned the wonder and the constant concern of the wisest from the early morning of the race. Despite man's constant probing into the phenomena which obtain, many questions clamor for solution, and each generation carries on the constant quest.

The means by which to make the search have become more numerous with the passing of the years, and each has been utilized to the fullest in an effort to push back the barriers of the unknown and to read the riddle of the universe. Biology has sought to offer a scientific explanation; philosophy a rational view. History testifies to its universality, and poetry attempts to soften its effects. Despite these aids, there hovers over death an impenetrable shroud to all who seek to solve the problems of life and death without revelation.

The eloquent Ingersoll gave expression to the despair which must characterize all who ignore or disregard inspiration when, at the tomb of his brother, he uttered these cheerless words: "My friends: I am going to do that which the dead often promised he would do for me. The loved and loving brother, husband, father, friend, died where manhood's morning almost touches noon, and while the shadows still were falling toward the West. He had not passed on life's highway the stone that marks the highest point, but being weary for a moment he laid down by the wayside and, using his burden for a pillow, fell into the dreamless sleep that kisses down his eyelids still. While yet in love with life and raptured with the world, he passed to silence and pathetic dust. Yet, after all, it

may be best, just in the happiest, sunniest hour of the voyage, while eager winds are kissing every sail, to dash against the unseen rock, and in an instant hear the billows roar over a sunken ship. For whether in mid-sea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. And every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jeweled with a joy, will, at its close, become a tragedy, as sad, and deep, and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death . . . Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unrelying dead there comes no word.”

Such is the helplessness of unbelief, the despair of those who deliberately draw the curtain of inspiration and refuse to regard the lessons which it alone can teach.

But little better is the philosophy of those who, while confessing to the belief of life after death, yet deny the plain lessons of truth regarding its nature. Some indeed seek to question the fact of death itself, in disregard of the universal observation of all men, and the eventual experience of all the race. Such are the so-called Christian Scientists. Others, in the realm of materialism, declare that all there is of man dies, and that in death complete, utter dissolution occurs. The truth is with neither. Granting that in death the body returns to the dust out of which it is constructed,

“This is not the whole sad story of creation
Told by toiling millions o'er and o'er'
One day, then black annihilation,
A sunlit passage to a sunless shore,”

— Emerson.

Still others err in assigning a wrong cause to the occasion for suffering and death in this dispensation. True it is that death and all its associated sorrows entered into the world through the door of sin; it is not true—and it is a serious sin to so affirm—that all affliction and death are the result of some particular sin or sins. In his effort to find a cause for every effort he observes, man has been very prone to see in the trials of humanity tokens of punishment. The so-called friends of Job were sure that his sufferings were the result of sins of which they were ignorant. The Jews were particularly obsessed with the idea, and the disciples of Christ exhibited traces of it. “Now there were some present at that very season who told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, *because they have* suffered these things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish” (Luke 13:1-3).

With reference to the blind man whose eyes the Lord opened, the disciples inquired: “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:2,3). In these two instances, Jesus settles once and for all the question of personal guilt as a necessary consequence of infirmity or death. That suffering and death may result as an immediate consequence of sin is admitted; a man, for example, through intoxication, may suffer an automobile accident and die; but the mere fact of suffering and death does not entail, as a necessary consequence, the commission of sin. Infants, the purest and best of earth, are incapable of sin, yet they die. Some of the most godly, consecrated souls in life have as their inescapable lot the problem of pain; and release from

pain-ridden bodies comes only by death. We must learn to distinguish between the *guilt* of sin and the consequences which attend it. Adam's sin brought death upon the race; we suffer its consequence, though not guilt of the actual transgression. "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression who is a figure of him that was to come" (Romans 5:12-14).

Often, well-meaning but misguided individuals add to the burdens of the faithful by attributing their infirmities to personal transgression; and the sufferers themselves, in seeking for some explanation thereof, often ask, "What is it that I have done that the Lord afflicts me in such fashion?" It is appointed unto men once to die," and this results from the fact that death has been passed upon all the race of which we are a part. We should be careful lest we imbibe the unbelief which characterized the superstitious who continually pore over the events of life to see in them tokens of their superstitious awe. John Greenleaf Whittier, in his lovely poem, *The Eternal Goodness*, reveals the faith that should characterize us all:

"Within the maddening maze of things
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings,
I know that God is good."

"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise;
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies."

“And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from him can come to me.
On ocean or on shore.”

“I know not where his islands lift
Their froned palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.”

“And thou, O Lord, by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on thee.”

What Is Death?

Some terms, notwithstanding the fact that they are often on our lips and frequently recur in our phraseology, are not easy of definition. Such are the words, *life* and *death*. Though we are in possession of the one and shall eventually experience the other, and despite the fact that their manifestations are ever about us, it is not easy to define them. True it is that our dictionaries say that life is “a vital force”; “existence”; “way or manner of living”; and death is “loss of life”; “state of being dead”; “cessation of existence”; etc.; but notwithstanding this, we instinctively feel that all such attempts at definition are inadequate and defective—far short of the demands of the case. In contemplation of these efforts to clarify the life and death, and conscious of their inadequacy, we are made to inquire, What is a vital force, what is existence, what is a way or manner of life; and what occurs in the loss of life, what is the state of being dead, and what is cessation of existence? Clearly, the definitions of the dictionaries do not satisfy.

On this, as on all matters relevant to man's origin and destiny, man must turn to the only source of

information thereon: the Bible. From its pages the most humble and obscure person may learn more regarding his earthly life and its termination than the wisest philosophers have been able to discover in centuries outside its pages.

In a simple, but wonderfully comprehensive statement, James said, "*The body apart from the spirit is dead*" James 2:26. By deduction we discover from this that life is that state or condition which exists while the body and the spirit are united; *death* is that state or condition resulting when the spirit is no longer in the body. Life, then, is the union of the body and spirit; death, their separation. Death *is not non-existence*, it is *not* cessation of life or of existence, it *is not extinction*. It is simply and solely separation—separation of body (the flesh) and the spirit (the immortal entity). James declares that under the condition which he contemplates, "the body ... is dead." The qualifying phrase is "apart from the spirit." Thus, death is the condition obtaining when the body is apart from the spirit. But when the body is apart from the spirit, the body and the spirit are separated. Death, then, is the separation of the body and spirit. This conclusion seems certain.

The penalty of Adam's sin was death—first, spiritual death, consisting in the separation from God which he suffered as the result of his transgression in Eden, and occurring the moment he partook of the forbidden fruit; and second, physical death in consequence of having been separated from the "tree of life" by which alone it was possible for him to perpetuate his physical existence. In view of the fact that the essential characteristic of death is separation, it follows that one may die in just as many senses as he can be joined to that which, as a result of such connection, produces life. These facts have long been recognized, and have often been demonstrated in our debates with materialists.

Death is not cessation of existence, it is not dissolution of the body, it is not annihilation. *It is the separation of the body and the spirit.* The body, when separated from the spirit, is said to be dead, not because it is inactive, cold, or even returning to the dust—these are the effects which attend death. The *cause* is that the spirit which animated it and gave it life is no longer there. Throughout the sacred writings the departure of the spirit (or soul, when regarded as synonymous with the spirit) is regarded as the occasion of death. The following instances will illustrate this fact:

1. Genesis 25:8: “And Abraham *gave up the ghost*, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people.”

2. Genesis 35:18: “And it came to pass, as her soul *was departing* (for she died).”

3. 1 Kings 17:22: “And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.”

4. Psalm 90:10: “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, *and we fly away.*”

5. Acts 7:59: “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit.*”

In giving up the ghost, Abraham died; the departing of Rachel's soul from her body resulted in her death; the child for whom the prophet prayed was dead and revived only when the soul returned to its body; the days of our years are terminated when that which is immortal flies away, and the martyr Stephen expired when his spirit left his bruised and broken body. The conclusion from this collation of scripture (which might be greatly extended) is irresistible, and establishes beyond reasonable doubt that death is simply the

condition subsisting when the spirit is no longer in the body.

Does the spirit survive apart from the body as a conscious entity? In a remarkable testimony to this fact, Paul wrote: "Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord ... and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). The original is even more striking: *Those who dwell in the body are at a distance from the Lord: those who have traveled out of the body reside with the Lord.*

Whether we shall know each other in heaven is truly a question of more than merely curious interest. Every thoughtful person who has suffered the poignant pain of parting from those near and dear and has tenderly laid their physical forms to rest in the tomb is vitally and absorbingly interested in the implications which this question raises. He knows that he shall see them no more in this land of the living; that they have passed beyond the door of death to return to this world no more. If there is no future recognition, the moment of parting at the grave, however forbidding the thought may be, becomes the hour of final separation. Soon we, too, shall divest ourselves of the mortal robe with which we are clothed here, and go to join the teeming millions of our race who have lived and loved and at last gone to take their places in the silent halls of death. On the morning of the resurrection day we shall rise to stand in judgment and to hear the pronouncement of our eternal destiny. If there is to be no recognition, we shall there be among total strangers; every memory we now possess will have been obliterated and every bond here severed, and as strangers we shall enter heaven and so live there forever and ever.

If a careful study of the sacred writings should lead us to such a conclusion, it will, it must be acknowl-

edged, greatly alter our conceptions of heaven and the abode of the sainted dead. Whether fully aware of all the implications which attach to the matter or not, our hope of heaven and our expectation of future bliss have been conditioned on the understanding that some wondrous day we shall be privileged to gather up the sundered threads of this existence so rudely severed in death, and in the company of dear loved ones and valued friends gone on before enjoy the ineffable bliss of paradise forever and ever and ever.

Are we prepared for such a conclusion?

Our whole being instinctively and unhesitatingly shrinks from such a supposition. We are, in the first place, *unwilling* to accept the conclusion that heaven will be peopled with those who are utter strangers to them here, that every vestige of memory will have been obliterated there, and that we shall never again be privileged to see and know those we have loved a while and lost here. And, secondly, we find ourselves *unable* to visualize a place of perfect happiness as heaven is alleged to be thus stripped of what is surely one of the sweetest joys and most fondly anticipated delights.

The view is opposed to reason, (a) because it ignores one of the most deep-seated and well-recognized desires of the heart: a glad reunion with the precious loved ones on the golden shores of the heavenly city. The separation which death inevitably brings is physical and outward and visible only; the ties of affection, regard, and memory are as tangible and definite and real as any which subsist in life. Our loved ones are gone from us in bodily presence only; they live on in our hearts with immortal and imperishable vigor. The granite stones which we erect to their precious memory, the tears which fall from our eyes on their graves, and the flowers which we place on their sacred mounds bear unmistakable testimony to

the love and affection we feel for them, and the memory which is enshrined in our hearts. “She was going unto the tomb to weep there,” is the record of not only Mary, but of millions of others in every age and county and clime. The soul longs for assurance of a happy reunion beyond the door of death, and diligently searches (and not in vain, we shall later see) for evidence in the scriptures that such a longing is not a delusion and fantasy.

(b) The wisest and greatest and best of all ages have confidently looked beyond the somber curtains of death and thought that there is such a place as the scriptures reveal heaven to be. Among the heathens the most enlightened and elevated minds, though without the full light of truth, while groping in the feeble glimmer of reason and grasping for whatever truth they might thus imperfectly see, were able to visualize a place of pleasure where a communion with the departed dead would be possible. Socrates, one of the wisest and best of the Grecian philosophers, condemned to death by unjust judges, calmly submitted to his fate, and talked with his friends almost to the moment when he took the fatal hemlock cup. In his speech to his judges following his sentence of death, he said: “If death is a removal to another place, and what is said to be true—that all the dead are there—what greater blessing can there be than this, my judges? Or if, on arriving at Hades, released from those who pretend to be judges, one shall find those that are true judges, and who are said to be there—Minos and Radamanthus, Aeacus, and Tripotolemus? ... Would this be a sad removal? ... At what price my judges, would not any one estimate the opportunity of questioning him who lead that mighty army against Troy, or Ulysses, or Sisyphus, or ten thousand others whom one might mention, both men and women? with whom to converse and associate,

and to question them, would be an inconceivable happiness.”

Such would indeed be “an inconceivable happiness,” and when to the opportunity afforded of interviewing the great and illustrious characters of all ages, we add the unspeakable privilege of talking with and seeing those nearest and dearest to our hearts, our innermost being thrills with joy at the anticipation of such, and heaven glows with undying luster as we long for its joys and rich delights. Whose soul is it which does not go wild at the prospect of *seeing* and *knowing* illustrious prophets, priests, and kings; of being associated with the great and wise and good of all ages: of sitting at the feet of Peter and Paul and the Lord? And when to this we add the wondrous prospect of seeing our dear loved ones in their immortal state, no longer weary and sad and worn and sick, no longer clothed in bodies weak with pain and ravaged by disease, but arrayed in the imperishable splendor which shall ever characterize the good, the pure, and the blest, who can avoid the conclusion of the peerless apostle that it is “very far better” there?

No. The hope of a glad and happy reunion “just over there” is not a cruel delusion, a vain and empty fantasy. Those who silently weep in loneliness may take comfort in the fact that they sorrow not in vain, or as others who have no hope. Inspiration has not left us comfortless in this matter; on the contrary, the warmest assurances of the reality of such a hope abound on the sacred page; and that we may confidently expect to mingle with, converse, and walk again with those we have loved and lost in a land where songs will be infinitely sweeter than any we have rendered here, where handclasps will be warmer than any we have ever experienced in this life, and where tears, heartaches, and sorrows are unknown.

Scriptural Evidence of Future Recognition

Thus far attention has been directed to the philosophical and reasonable basis of the doctrine of future recognition in the heavenly sphere. While neither philosophy nor reason constitutes the *final*, or, for that matter, even an *authoritative*, word on any matter of divine providence, it will be admitted by thoughtful persons that when each approves and endorses the idea, such amounts to corroborative and presumptive evidence of the matter under consideration; and when to such presumptive proof is added the infallible testimony of sacred writers, faith and reason combine to establish the truth beyond reasonable question. Having, in this inquiry, listened to reason, we are now to hear revelation on the subject of future recognition.

In this field, the evidence is so abundant, the proof so varied, and the references so numerous one wonders where to begin. By this it is not meant that the doctrine is taught in formal propositions or announced in direct statements. One will search in vain for any positive affirmation thereon by any Biblical writer. On this subject, as on a great many matters of equal importance, we are dependent on incidental allusion, logical deduction, and necessary inference for the proof with which we hope to sustain our proposition. Such evidence, as every one skilled in evaluating it knows, is no less credible or relevant because undesigned. And, it is, in the nature of the case, all the more abundant, for this reason.

1. There is, for example, the incidental allusions to impending joy which Paul expected to experience in the life to come because of the faithfulness and devotion of those to whom he had preached and among whom he had labored. They were his “joy and crown” (Philippians 4:1), those whom he fondly and confidently expected to afford him with the occasion for “rejoicing ... in the day of the Lord Jesus” (2

Corinthians 1:14). “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” he asked, and then answered his question thus: “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19). But what would be the manner of his realization of such rejoicing? Again he answers: “He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Corinthians 4:14). Who among us can believe that these who were to be raised would be total and utter strangers to Paul, and he to them, with no memory of any former association, with the recollection of their great obligation to him completely blotted out, not even knowing that it was he who led them out of darkness into light and from the power of Satan unto God? Truly, the words, “shall present us with you,” must signify more than the mere gathering of unfamiliar personalities, the assembly of strangers!

2. The comforting assurances of holy writ, penned by inspired men for the purpose of soothing sorrowful hearts and comforting the sad and grief-stricken, imply a reunion and consequent resumption of association in a better land: “But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him.... Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13,14,18). Two classes of the dead are here contemplated: (1) Those who died in Christ; (2) those who died out of Christ. Loved ones of the former class are not, as those of the latter, without hope; on the contrary, their loved ones will reappear with the Lord when the sign of the Son of man is seen in the clouds, and be privileged again to be associated with those whom, in death, they left behind. In consequence, we are admonished and

encouraged to (a) entertain hope and (b) to find comfort in this fact. But, on the assumption that the personality of those we have loved and lost is obliterated, their memories of us, and ours of them forevermore gone and with no tangible marks of identity remaining, how is *hope* possible and where is there occasion for comfort in such a circumstance? Before such a prospect, the mind quails, hope fades into despair, words calculated to comfort become empty mockery, and the passage is without significance.

3. The doctrine of rewards and punishments, taught so clearly and at such great length in the scriptures, implies and necessitates the conclusion that future recognition is an assured fact. In the field of criminal jurisprudence, for example, a man is regarded as worthy of punishment for unsocial acts committed, only when it appears that he is mentally capable of recognizing the nature of his deed. However violent the act and vicious the deed, when it is shown that the one having committed it is mentally incompetent, penal processes are immediately suspended, and the man is committed to an institution for the insane. Are we, in the light of this humane and reasonable consideration of law—a law which affects itself to be founded on the law of God—to assume that a benign Father will, nevertheless, disregard the competency of the culprit, and administer punishment *for acts of which the person being punished has no recollection whatsoever*? We shrink from the very suggestion of such an imputation.

Moreover, the scriptures clearly establish the fact that in judgment men will be possessed of the memory of deeds done here, and will allege such in extenuation of, and in protest to, the decision there to be handed down: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name

cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?” (Matthew 7:22). Further, in numerous instances individuals, now in the disembodied state, are declared to be possessed of a distinct and vivid recollection of events occurring on earth prior to their passing: “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:9,10). These were (a) personalities in the spirit realm; (b) they had an awareness of their surroundings; (c) they knew why they were there: they had been murdered; (d) they inquired when judgment would be exercised on those guilty of their murder. If there is not here a clear and convincing demonstration of consciousness following death; if this passage does not establish a definite and mental connection between this life and the next; if it is not shown that there is a positive and certain retention of memory with reference to events occurring here, then there is an end to all reasonable exegesis, and we may as well be done with any effort to ascertain the meaning and significance of any passage in the scriptures by the usual and ordinary rules of interpretation.

4. The case of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), whether a parable or not, supplies us with a glimpse of the state of the dead, lifts the curtain of the future, and enables us to look for a moment on the scenes of the yet-to-be. The consciousness which each of the characters possessed, their awareness of their surroundings, and the memory which they retained of the world from which they had but lately left all point irresistibly to the conclusion which we have reached. And, couched in the two words, “*Son*,

remember,” is a necessary inference for all for which we contend.

5. Paul, in a chapter designed to deal at length with the resurrection state, represents the risen saint as standing on the verge of his empty grave and shouting the song of triumph: “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” (I Corinthians 15:55). This consciousness of triumph is possible only on the supposition that memory is able to carry across the chasm of death the recollection of the destiny with which all men, until the Lord comes, are faced.

6. A phrase of peculiar significance, and especially relevant to our present study, occurs in connection with the record of Abraham's death. In a passage poignantly pathetic, one which simply touches the heart with its simplicity and pathos, and picturing the passing of the venerable patriarch, his demise is recorded thus: “And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people” (Genesis 25:8). The phrase, “*And was gathered to his people,*” occurs with slight variation in the chronicle of Ishmael's death (Genesis 25:17), the death of Isaac (Genesis 35:29), Jacob (Genesis 49:29,33), Moses and Aaron (Deuteronomy 32:50). This phrase cannot properly be understood as referring to the burial of their bodies, for Moses, as an example, was buried in a secret place “in the valley in the land of Moab,” far from the sepulchers of his fathers. The reference must, therefore, be to his spirit, and to its reunion with the spirits of his ancestors gone on before. Jacob was “gathered unto his people,” while in the land of Egypt, and thus long before he was borne to Canaan and entombed in the soil of his homeland (Genesis 49:33—50:1-3). It seems certain, in the light of these facts, that the phrase, “gathered unto his people,” refers, not to the fact of death, nor to the place

thereof, but to the journey of the spirit to the unseen world.

The grief-stricken David, with the body of his dead child yet unburied, said, "Can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me*" (2 Samuel 12:23). The question which the humbled king raised in rhetorical, the answer obvious. He could not bring the child back. He was aware that the spirit of the child was not there, though the body yet remained. The comfort which he derived was conditioned on journeying to the place where the child was. Are we to conclude that the monarch believed that, on the occasion of such a reunion, this child would be to him no more than any other child, that he would, indeed, be unable to know whether it was his own child or not? We cannot believe it.

Jesus, in a discourse dealing with the wickedness of his contemporaries, affirmed that the men of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of the fiery prophet Jonah, would rise up in judgment and condemn those of his generation. In order to do what is affirmed of them, it will be necessary for the men of Nineveh to be in judgment; to be in judgment in their own characters and clothed with the personalities which they possessed here: to retain the detailed and minute memory of events then occurring, and particularly, of the waywardness, rebellion, and perverseness characteristic of those about whom the Savior spoke (Matthew 12:38-41). Only on the supposition that the memory of men in the next world extends to this is such a circumstance as these verses relate possible.

Objections to the Doctrine of Future Recognition Answered

Despite the abundance of evidence which obtains and the consolation which the doctrine of future

recognition brings, objections have been raised and arguments against it offered. That such arguments are offered and objections raised does not establish a presumption that the doctrine is false, or that the evidence by which it is sustained is insufficient or weak. Objections have been, and are being, offered against every cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion. When the mind is disposed to cavil, human perverseness is such that it finds at hand unbelief on which to feed and grounds which to itself is sufficient to oppose that against which it arrays itself.

The objections which are filed against the doctrine of future recognition have their origin in a defective concept of the nature of the next life or in projecting the limitations of this life into the next, or both.

1. It is, for example, alleged that we will have lost, in the next world, the physical characteristics and recognizable distinctions which we possess in this; and that with these gone and with ourselves nothing but “spirit beings” there will be nothing with which to identify us with this existence. By “spirit beings” is usually meant ghost-like wraiths of the same nature as a child imagines fairies to possess. How may such, intangible and immaterial beings be recognized, it is asked.

In reply it should be said that such concepts as the foregoing grow out of a gross misapprehension of the teaching of the scriptures with reference to the nature and characteristics of the resurrected saint. The resurrection of the body—this body changed from a mortal to an immortal one—is taught in the fullest, most explicit, and satisfactory manner. “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption” (I Corinthians 15:42). What is the antecedent of the “its” of this entire passage? “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). What corruptible, what mortal?

Corruptibility and mortality are affirmed of some part of us. Of what part? Not the spirit, certainly; for it is neither mortal nor corruptible. Reference is, therefore, to the body. But the affirmation of the text is that “this” mortal shall put on immortality. What mortal? The one we now possess. What is it about us that we now possess that is mortal? This body. The “manner of body” which it pleases God to give us is that which undergoes the change thus indicated (I Corinthians 15:35-38)..

Job said, “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (job 19:25-27). Here, in the most positive fashion, the resurrection of the body, the preservation of the personality, and the identity of the individual are taught, Job believed that *he* (as Job) would see God; that he would see God in the flesh (with the change implied through which bodies must pass in the resurrection), and that it would be Job who experienced this with his own eye, and not another.

But to set the matter at rest once and for all we have only to examine the references respecting the resurrection of the Lord's body. He was “the firstfruits of them that are asleep,” the pledge and token of the resurrection of all the rest. (I Corinthians 15:20). When he shall appear, “we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2). But the body in which Jesus came forth possessed the same distinctive features as that which was buried. The disciples looked with transfigured gaze upon his lovely form; they thrilled with rapture to his familiar voice; with wonder and reverent joy they touched him with their hands and examined the cruel spear thrust in his side. So full and satisfactory was the evidence thus afforded them that ever thereafter they had the

fullest assurance of his identity, and from this conviction they never wavered. If then his resurrection is indeed a demonstration of the certainty of ours; if we are truly to be as he was; does it not follow that those who know us as well as the disciples were acquainted with him before his death will see in us the same recognizable characteristics?

2. Others based an objection to the doctrine of future recognition on the Lord's reply to the Sadducean cavil that "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). But this, far from sustaining the objection, establishes its opposite; for it asserts that the risen saints will be as "angels in heaven," who surely must possess the faculty of memory and who are undoubtedly acquainted with each other. This statement of our Lord was a reply to the Sadducees who, in objecting to the doctrine of the resurrection, presented a hypothetical case which was designed, if not to make the doctrine of the resurrection impossible, to make it look at least ridiculous. The statement was made to show that the marriage relation will not be maintained in the next life. It should be noted that this passage teaches that the relation of marriage is to be terminated; not that the recollection will be blotted out.

3. Some affect great difficulty in accepting future recognition on that ground that should we know each other there, and some of our loved ones are not there, the consciousness of this fact would mar the bliss of heaven. But this supposition, instead of solving the difficulty, increases it; for, if we are unable to recognize any of our loved ones there, we must then be uncertain whether any of them are there, even if they are, in which case we should worry about all of them, though there! Much better, on this hypothesis, for some of them to be there, and know them, than for all of them to be there and not know any of them. The conclusion

which those who offer this objection reach is grounded in an erroneous concept with references to the attitude which shall characterize us in the next world. It assumes that we shall ignore the manner of life characteristic of those who have failed to reach heaven and desire their presence in spite of the way in which they have lived. When the mists have cleared, and all imperfect conceptions are gone, we shall be able fully to acquiesce in the righteous judgments of God. We shall then be able to see clearly that those who are not in heaven do not deserve to be there; that they made no effort to reach that place; that, on the contrary, they resisted every effort to lead them there. Knowing this, we shall then be able to accept without question the wise decisions of the Judge of all the universe and recognize fully that he doeth all things well.

We have earlier seen that death is the separation of the body from all that involves life. This would include the mind and all of its operations, as well as the soul or spirit—the immortal nature. This being true, and thoughtful people will not question it, it must follow that a disembodied spirit is without any relationship of time and space, along with all material matters. It seems quite clear that if the physical organs are absent—and they are in death—the senses are no longer operative, and all functions necessarily have terminated. This is not to say that there is no communication between spirits in the spiritual world; it is to say that there is not, because there cannot be such communication between those of that world and this, the means of and avenues through which such communication would be achieved are no longer present.

This consideration, were there no others—and there are numerous ones to be drawn from the scriptures, clearly and irrevocably establishes the falsity of claims increasingly being made of communication with the

dead by those yet living. Any hope thereto is destined to certain failure, and any offer by spiritualistic mediums to establish such contact is a cruel hoax engineered by those who would prey on the sorrowful and the sad, those who still long for “the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still.” Alleged accounts of such intercommunication bear on their face their fictitious character, purportedly claiming sensations through senses no longer present in death. The claims are thus not only opposed to the scriptures, but to common sense, and are simply figments of imagination, the result of which is to deceive and delude.

Spirits, out of their tabernacles of flesh (2 Corinthians 5:1), are, therefore without the faculties of sensing the materialistic effects always alleged to be characteristic of these seances, and any impression, dependent on physical powers must, in the absence of such powers, be regarded as impossible, and the effort to achieve it resulting from superstitious imagination.

It is at this point that another matter of absorbing interest arises, and the satisfactory solution of another problem appears. It must follow that the spirit—the immortal nature which is not subject to death, and which survives it—is, in its disembodied state, without awareness of the passing of time. The thoughtful person must have pondered, with no little concern, the question of the alleged lapse of time, if such there be, and as effects on the spirit, from the moment of death until the resurrection, between which millenniums of years, as time is reckoned on earth, may intervene. It has been thousands of years, for example, since the death of the illustrious patriarch Abraham, the consummation of all matters is not yet, and could possibly not be for untold centuries; for multitudes, time as measured in centuries on earth, moves slowly by; are those now in the spirit world, and all of us who are to

follow, destined to wait out the passing of the ages, through seemingly endless periods, before receiving the reward of a life of service here?

It should be kept in mind that time cannot be contemplated, indeed, does not exist apart from the events by which it is determined and measured. A day, for example, is calculated by the rotation of the earth; the hours are arbitrary divisions of the day, as minutes are of the hour and seconds are of the minute. The spirit, at death, wings its way into the Hadean world to wait for the resurrection of the body, the final judgment and the end of the world. For it time no longer exists, since neither the means by which it is determined, nor the conceptions by which it is recognized are present. How, for example may a spirit, released from its body, and gone from the earth, be aware of the seasons, of hot and cold, of night and day, or other impressions possible only to those yet on earth?

I must say to you, in the light of these facts, that I incline strongly to the view that the spirit, free of its body and all fleshly limitations, is wholly unaware of the passing of the years, the centuries or the millenniums men use to mark off time here! It is not out of order to draw a parallel from our own experiences in dreams that accompany sleep (our Lord and the apostles did in comparing death to sleep), by noting that utter unawareness of the passing of time in dreams—surely the nearest we can come to apprehending being apart from time. In such experiences there is complete absence of any consciousness of the passing of time—dreams may, and often do, bridge great chasms of time, and involve vivid experiences and impressions of the long ago which nonetheless seem but yesterday. These, and other considerations into which time does not now allow, lead me, at least, to conclude that those in the spirit world are not bound

by the restrictions of time, and that the “period” of their sojourn in Hades will pass for them in what to us on earth is but a moment.

I rejoice to believe that loved ones, now awaiting our coming, will not languish through long periods for the happy moment of glad reunion on golden shores, neither shall we be required to wait through endless ages in Hades for the blissful joys of the heavenly city; stripped of the limitations of time and space, we'll live in eternity when the “past” the “present” and the “future,” are all before us in one grand and wonderful view! This seems clearly deducible from that comforting and consoling statement of Paul to the Thessalonians: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (literally, 'go before') them that are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Though penned primarily to assure sorrowing saints in the Thessalonian church that their loved ones who died before the return of the Lord would not be left behind in the catching up of the saints to heaven at the last day, it nonetheless clearly implies that none will exceed others in the joys and blessings of salvation which would hardly be the case if there are indeed long periods of waiting for some saints before the realization of all their hopes and longings, as would characterize

Abraham and all the ancient saints, in that event. I rejoice to believe that all of the blessed dead, though they died centuries ago, will not be any more disadvantaged than the last faithful disciple who shuffles off his mortal coil of flesh moments before the trumpet sounds, heralding the end of the world and the consummation of all things.

Objections raised to the doctrine of future recognition are not valid. It is grounded in hope, it is sustained by faith, and love longs for its realization. *It is the truth.* Let us derive great comfort and consolation in it.