



I. C. MATHIS

Northwest Nazarene College

LIBRARY

"If a Man Die, Shall He Live
Again?"

Riley Library
Northwest Nazarene College
Nampa, Idaho 83651

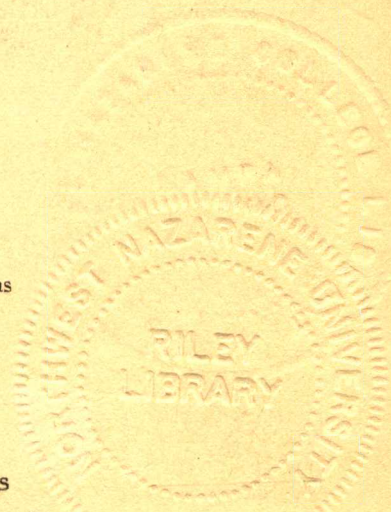
By

I. C. Mathis

Copyright 1929
I. C. Mathis
Hutchinson, Kansas

Printed for
REV. I. C. MATHIS
by the
NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE
KANSAS CITY, MO.

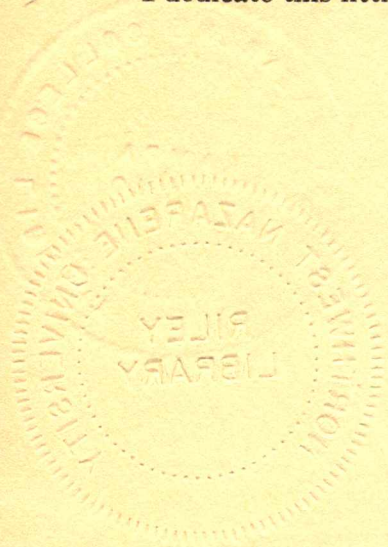
John E. Riley Library
Northwest Nazarene University
Nampa, Idaho



25365

DEDICATORY

To A. M. Hills, D. D., LL. D., under whose teaching I sat for several years to my great profit; and whose life to me has been a wonderful blessing, I dedicate this little booklet.



Northwest Nazarene College

LIBRARY

Riley Library

Northwest Nazarene College
Nampa, Idaho 83651 ✓

INTRODUCTION

Here is a needed and able book. It is written by a thoughtful young man. Its subject is important enough to engage anyone's interest and attention; for it concerns us all.

Only last week, some college students of the East were ventilating their opinions through the public press, proclaiming their doubts about any future life or the immortality of the soul. They are to be pitied.

This book on the profoundly important question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" would illuminate them. It would dispel the fogs that have gathered in their mental sky and obscured the sun of truth that is now concealed from view and left them groping in darkness. And such a darkness! A spiritual "*darkness that can be felt!*"

There are many such who need to have their midnight changed to day. This treatise will help them. There is not a dull line in it. In the name of Him who is "The Light of the World" I commend it to all.

Yours in Christ,

A. M. HILLS.

FOREWORD

The writer in presenting this little booklet to the people makes no claim to literary merit. Neither does he consider this to be an exhaustive discussion of the question.

The thoughts herein presented were first preached as a sermon. Our motive in putting them into this form is, that those into whose hands this booklet shall fall shall be made to ponder the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" And then to make preparation for that life after death. If in this we are successful we shall be grateful to our Lord.

I. C. MATHIS.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.....	7
II. CAN THE QUESTION BE ANSWERED?.....	9
III. THE UNIVERSAL BELIEF OF MANKIND.....	12
IV. THE POWERS OF THE HUMAN MIND.....	17
V. THE ANALOGY OF NATURE.....	21
VI. THE INEQUALITIES OF PROVIDENCE.....	23
VII. DIVINE REVELATION.....	27
VIII. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.....	30
IX. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL NECESSI- TATES A HEAVEN AND A HELL.....	33
X. THE CLOSING APPEAL.....	39

“If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?”

(Job 14:14)

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION

No question, perhaps, can more seriously engage the attention of man than the one contained in the above text of scripture. To the millions that have died, that now live, and shall live after we are gone, this is an important question.

What happens to a soul when it leaves the body that has encased it for years, and starts on the great adventure into the “Hereafter”? Does it suffer or is it happy? Just what kind of an existence does the soul enter into when it makes its appearance on the other shore? Surely, to one who is destined to make that journey sooner or later, whether he wants to or not, this is a question of deep and vital interest.

Most, if not all of us, have loved ones that have taken that journey down into “the valley of the shadow of death.” It would be strange indeed, if we were not interested in knowing, as far as we can, what has happened to them, what is their condition and what engages their attention and activity in the “Great Hereafter.”

Then there is a personal reason why we should be interested in this question. We ourselves may, at any moment, be called upon to make this great ad-

venture into the land of death. "Who knoweth the day of his death?" "In the midst of life we are in death." How far is it to the grave? Not so very far for any of us. Every step we have taken from the cradle has been in the direction of the grave; and every step we shall take from this moment shall bring us nearer the day of death. Our days on earth are as a hand's-breadth. Life is as a vapor, which endureth for a little time and then passeth away. We are like grass—"in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth." The generations of men chase one another in rapid succession as shadows o'er the plain and continue not. On train, in auto, on steamship, on land or sea, walking, riding, in the pulpit, at the bench, by the counter, in the pew, at your desk, at your own fire-side the call may come to you to make that journey into that far away land. If the Lord tarries, it is not a matter of uncertainty to any of us, as to whether or not we shall die. "It is appointed unto man once to die." This is his destined end: "For this is the end of men." None can escape the cruel monster death. "The king must lay aside his crown, step down from his throne, and lie down beside the beggar in the clods of the valley. The minister must pronounce his final benediction, close his Bible, surrender his flock to the great Shepherd and die. The magistrate must change his judicial ermine for the garments of the sepulchre. The lawyer must write his last brief, finish his last litigation; the author his

last column; the poet his last song, and all sleep with their fathers. The laborer must leave his plow in the field, his axe in the woodland, and give his brawny and stalwart frame as food for the worms. The mother must leave her old arm chair tenantless and leave her helpless babes alone. The innocent and playful child must drop its toys, and with its tiny arms grapple with the iron strength of the monster death.” The time of this event may be and is uncertain; but the fact of it is as certain and sure as that we now live. And since we must die, the question, “Shall we live again?” is one of tremendous importance.

II. CAN THE QUESTION BE ANSWERED?

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.” How true and solemn are these words of the inspired. They have lost nothing of their significance or appropriateness through the long lapse of the ages. The dark river of death still rolls continuously and ceaselessly onward and the generations of men are hurried away to that vast, shoreless, unfathomed ocean from which none return. Not only the old, the decrepit, the friendless and the miserable, for whom the earth has no more joys or hopes must die, but—

“Our eyes have seen the rosy light
Of youth’s soft cheek decay,

And fate descend in sudden night,
On manhood's middle day."

But now the question is, what follows? Does life like an expiring candle go out into darkness? When death severs all the ties of earth, and the grave closes upon us and our friends, and hides us from the gaze and the knowledge of the living, are we to see and embrace each other no more? "If a man die, shall he live again?" Long ago this question was propounded with anxious solicitude by the patriarch. "There is hope," said the inquirer, "of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stalk thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Does he cease to exist, or in some embodied or disembodied form, outlive the wreck of his corruptible body, susceptible of pleasure and pain as now, in a new and higher sphere of being?

In every age of the world these with many have been questions of deep and anxious interest. But how can they with certainty be answered? Beyond the grave we cannot see. An impenetrable veil is before us. How can we know whether or not that "when a man dies" he does or "shall live again"? Can these questions be answered?

It is claimed that immortality is not a demon-

strable fact. Questions have been propounded and doubts expressed which proceed from the idea that, if the soul is immortal and shall live after death, the fact must be susceptible of complete demonstration. Moral evidence is rejected as incomplete or insufficient basis for confidence. Yet the absolutely demonstrable holds small place in the practical life of men. The progress of the race, the achievements of the individual, are made of the highway of probability. The most potent facts in the experience of the race are open to denial in the same way as the doctrine of immortality.

We are reminded that science comes from the dissecting room, scalpel in hand, to report its failure to find anything in the human organism bearing the stamp of immortality. But we affirm immortality of "that which we call spirit; that which no scalpel has ever laid open and no lens has ever enabled the eye to behold; that to which belongs none of the known properties of matter and which is nevertheless sovereign over matter; that which thinks and reasons, plans and wills, loves and fears, suffers and enjoys; that which using the marvelous mechanism of the body, sees, hears and feels; that which reaching out into the realm of matter, subdues it and shapes it to its own higher purposes; that which no man has or can see, but which nevertheless, constructs in its invisible workshop the model of everything which later is given form in wood or stone or metal. It is the MAN who has brain and sense and muscle, but of

whom brain and sense and muscle form no part. It is the man who works through a physical mechanism, but who is no more to be confounded with the mechanism than the mallet and chisel are to be confounded with the sculptor." This is the being we believe shall live after death. The man that shall outlive the wreck of his mortal body or "live again." Yes, we believe the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" can be answered. And in proof of this position we offer the following arguments.

III. THE UNIVERSAL BELIEF OF MANKIND

The idea of immortality seems to have been born in the race. Everywhere, among all peoples, savage and civilized, the thought of immortality is entertained. On this question there is entire unity of sentiment, while on almost every other of doctrine or morals, wide differences of opinion have, and do still exist.

But though men have differed widely respecting the nature and the employment and enjoyment of a world to come it cannot be disputed that the grand idea of the soul's immortality has with few exceptions been universally received. Greek and Roman mythology, Chinese, African and Hindu worship, recognize existence beyond the grave. The hieroglyphics of Egypt and the altars of ancient Mexico teach the same belief. The writings of the celebrated men of antiquity are pervaded with the same idea, though

vague and indefinite, in comparison with the works of modern thinkers. We find that Socrates and Plato and many of the greatest Greek philosophers held the same doctrine. Socrates, believing in the immortality of the soul, drank the poisonous draught with amazing tranquility and with the aspect of one about to exchange a short and wretched life, for a blessed and eternal existence. We find that Homer, Ovid and Virgil taught the same doctrine. And thus we might go on. “Even our own American Indians believed that far beyond the distant blue mountains there is an expanse of water full of laughing, blooming islands, with spacious hunting grounds, where they will go after they die.” As Pope says:

“Even the poor Indian, whose untutored mind,
 Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind;
 Whose soul proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk or milky way:
 Yet simpler nature to his hope has given
 Behind the cloud-topt hill an humbler heaven;
 Some safer world in depth of wood embraced,
 Some happier island in the watery waste,
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold,
 And thinks admitted to yon equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.”

This shows not only that man universally believes in life after death, but also that it is in harmony with his instinctive nature or it would not find so ready an admission. Cicero long ago observed:

"In everything the consent of all nations is to be accounted the law of nature, and to resist it is to resist the voice of God." To whatever this universal belief in a future state is traced—whether we regard it as a mere traditionary legend, or a belief originally impressed upon the heart of man by the Almighty, or as a divine revelation, handed down from generation to generation, it certainly forms a strong argument in its favor.

Is it not fair and reasonable to assume that a belief that is universal with the race has its basis in the immovable granite of our intuitive nature? That which is universal and persistent in the history of man must be natural; and if the belief of immortality be natural to man, if it rises out of his intuitive nature, all analogy points to its realization. All natural appetites find their correspondents; all needs find their supply. Hunger finds food; the eye finds light; the ear, sound; intelligence, problems for its solution; love, objects upon which to lavish itself.

There seems to be an instinctive longing in the human breast for immortality. What is instinct? It has been defined as "A hereditary constitutional tendency or impulse, which begins to act automatically when aroused by the proper stimulus, and which finds in its environment the appropriate means of satisfaction." And every God implanted instinct can be trusted. Thus there is in every animal, whether herbivorous or carnivorous, an instinct for a certain kind of food, which springs not from reason

or education. Water fowls have a native instinct for water, and for the food thence to be obtained, and everything is provided for, and adapted to their instinct. Take the bee; it builds a honeycomb according to mathematical and architectural principles. How? By instinct. Ants organize and carry on a complex social order which reminds us of human government and society. How? Instinct. A wasp will sting a spider or caterpillar in its chief nerve center, so as to paralyze it, and yet not kill it, with a skill which seems to involve a knowledge of anatomy. Birds, how wonderful they are! We are told that the golden plover breeds in summer in Arctic North America and then drives itself in a marvelous flight of upward of ten thousand miles to winter in Patagonia. How does it know the way? Day and night it wings its way over the tractless ocean and strange land, driven and guided by the mysterious power we call “instinct.”

You take the wild geese that journey northward in the spring time. “In that far away land they make their nest on the margin of the lake. They lay their eggs and hatch their young, who sport on the sunlit waters during the summer days in perfect contentment. But as the autumn approaches, ere the trees put on their golden robes of imperial beauty, or the grass dies in the field, or the rushes nod their fading plumes toward the leaden waters, the birds that never knew another home, feel a strange desire moving in their breast to be away to the southland. Obe-

dient to this instinctive longing they spread their broad wings and soar away, high above fields their eyes have never seen before; across lakes on whose waters they have never floated; on and on, hundreds of miles away from the deserted nests is the south-land to answer to the instinct that urged them to make the move." How beautiful is the arrangement!

Man is also a creature of instincts. He is born with his nature packed full of them. He is a creature of reason and intelligence, but also of instinct. Down deep in his subconscious mind are buried continents of desire and longing, and out of this great deep there rises up—like a mountain-top appearing as an island—the instinctive longing for life after death.

Now if instincts are prophecies and if they represent the fundamental needs of life, why is not man's instinct for immortality just as true as the instinct of bird, or bee, or ant, in their lower sphere? Does the human instinct play us false? Would God honor the instinct in the breast of a wild goose and dishonor that which we find in the breast of man? That is unthinkable. He would not do it. He has not done it. Is it not safe then, to assume that any desire that springs out of our instinctive nature, and is common to all men in all ages, contains in itself a prophecy of fulfilment.

A preacher stood one evening, looking out over the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean and, describing his feelings to a friend, said: "I watch the sunset as I look over the rim of the blue Pacific, and there is

no mystery beyond the horizon line, because I know what is over there. Over there, where the sun is just sinking, is Japan. That star is rising over China. In that direction lie the Philippines. I know all that.”

And then the preacher turned from earth's geography to heaven's hope, and told his friend of another horizon line at the west end of life, and said that, although he had never voyaged beyond that line, or met anybody who had, yet he instinctively knew that beyond the sunset there was another life.

There is a certain fascination about living on the Pacific Coast at the west end of America, for we know that if we journey west of here, we will reach the east. This is so because the world is round; after the west is done, the east begins again. Follow the sunset far enough and you will find sunrise. It is all a kind of symbol of immortality.

IV. THE POWERS OF THE HUMAN MIND

The immortality of the soul might be argued from the wonderful powers and capabilities of the human intellect, and its susceptibility, of to us indefinite improvement. For instance, see what a vast difference there is between the infant and the man of sixty years. What proficiency in knowledge is made, what intellectual grasp is developed during these short years. When we stop to think of the intellectual heights men have reached, we see some of the powers of the human mind. There seems to be no

limit to intellectual development and improvement. Even in the short space allotted man on earth, how grand are his achievements. It is interesting to note some of the discoveries of intellectual genius. He sweeps the heavens with his telescope and numbers and names the stars. He whitens the seas with ships of commerce, and belts the continents with steel. He flies like a bird through the air, or goes under the water like a fish. He weighs the earth, and measures the distance to the most remote planet. He builds towering skyscrapers, and plucks messages from ethereal waves. He explores the dark caves of earth, and ransacks the sepulchre of the ocean. He analyzes the elementary principles of the invisible atmosphere, arrests the lightning's flash and chains it to his chariot wheel. No wonder a heathen philosopher said: "When I consider the wonderful activity of the mind: So great a memory of the past, and such a capacity for what is future: When I behold such a number of arts and sciences and such a multitude of discoveries, I am firmly persuaded that a nature which contains so many things within itself, cannot be mortal."

Now give human minds free scope, remove the obstructions of disease and death, place an immortal career before them, and around them God's wonderful works and ways, who can imagine the greatness of intellectual expansion to which they may attain? They may reach the highest point to which an archangel has ever yet attained. And as the eagle with

his eye resting on the sun, and his wings upon the wind, mounts steadily upward toward the bright orb, till lost in the effulgence of its blaze; so human minds, careering on beyond where Gabriel now stands, or soars in heaven's own light, delve into the unsolved mysteries of the eternal.

And now, is it not reasonable to infer that minds, so admirably constituted and endowed, must be designed for something higher than this world affords? Is it not in accordance with the wisdom and goodness of God and the nature of the mind, to infer that it is immortal, and destined according to its capabilities to an unending career? What an impeachment it would be on the wisdom and goodness of God, to suppose that He had created minds, with such vast and inconceivable powers, only that He might dash them with their frail tabernacles in pieces at death; that He had lighted such intellectual lamps beaming forth amid the darkness and obstructions of earth, with surpassing brilliance and beauty, only that He might quench them in the gloomy night of annihilation! How can it enter the mind of man, which is capable of such development, that he is to fall away into nothing at death? Suppose a man should construct at great expense a succession of machines, capable of accomplishing wonderful things, and just as he had put them into operation, should dash them to pieces—what would be thought of him? Who would not stand amazed at his folly, at the immense waste of time, materials and property? Such waste

and folly do those attribute to the Creator, who deny man's immortal existence. The fact that there is no proportion between the term of the present life and man's capabilities of mental growth, points to a future life.

Dr. Clarence True Wilson in a statement in the Literary Digest of March 30, 1929, said: "The soul's capacity for endless improvement, service and worship, points to a future life which will make possible greater future development than we achieve here."

And he goes on to say, "A man does not come to himself here. The majority of men have scarcely any idea of the potent and splendid faculties slumbering in them. Shall God bring out all there is in an insect that flits for an hour in the summer twilight, and then to the best and loftiest being he has made, the being to whom he gave the rule and dominion of this world, and whom he has crowned with glory and honor—shall He give him no chance to come to himself? Sir Isaac Newton, when he was an old man, said he did not know how he appeared to other people; but to himself he seemed like a little child, picking up a few pebbles of truth here and there upon the shore, while the great ocean of undiscovered truth lay unexplored before him.

If immortality is but an iridescent dream, the most illustrious minds that earth has known have been deceived. Some of the greatest thinkers of the

ages have been the strongest advocates of immortality, Socrates, Plato, Newton, St. Paul, Wesley and many others whom we might name.

V. THE ANALOGY OF NATURE

When we turn to nature we find nothing opposed to the doctrine of immortality, but very much that assures us that it is true. If we look to the state of man at his entrance upon life, and contrast the helplessness and dependence of infancy with the strength of manhood, we can deduce this general law, that the same creatures may exist at different periods, with varied degrees of perception and sensation, and capacities of action, enjoyment and suffering. This law holds good in many departments of animal life. The worm becomes the fly and the insect bursts its shell. The butterfly, casting aside its chrysalis shape, rises on its silver-tinged wings into the summer sunbeam. Would wings be folded into the worm, if they were not one day to enable it to fly?

In our present condition of existence, we have capacities for action, enjoyment and suffering. The very possession of these before death is a strong presumption that we shall retain them in and after death. It is in accordance with all true logical argument, to believe in the continuance of any attribute or function of existence, whether in mind or matter, until we see adequate cause for its destruction. There is nothing so far as we can discern to suggest

the idea that human beings will ever cease to live. We cannot of course trace the experience through and after death. All that we can do is to reason from analogy. Death destroys the sensible proof, that after this great change we retain possession of the powers of thought and action; but it furnishes no reason for supposing that we are deprived of them, and that the grave puts an end to all the aspirations of life.

We may lose our limbs or certain of the organs of sense and yet we remain the same beings. The amputation of a limb or an arm is never regarded as proof of a corresponding diminution in the activity of the mind. Many gifted men have deformed bodies, and others who are deaf or dumb or blind, and some who have lost both arms and both limbs, are marvels of intellectual acumen.

Our bodies are continually wearing away, so that in the course of a few years we have a complete change in our material and physical being; but in spite of these changes we remain the same living agent. The thinking principle remains unaltered—the real, or inner man, is unaffected by the change of the outer. If this is so during the present existence, why not so after death, when the tabernacle of clay has been completely dissolved and has returned to dust?

Then if the separation or destruction of the bodily organs does not in any way affect the inner or thinking man, we argue that in our present state of

being, the soul or the inner man, can exercise its functions without or uninfluenced by the body. This being true, we have a right to believe that after death it will continue to act in a similar method.

Nature’s analogies never belie her Maker. She teaches no such doctrine as would represent the Almighty making man designedly to perish with the body.

VI. THE INEQUALITIES OF PROVIDENCE PROVE THAT MAN IS IMMORTAL IF GOD IS JUST

Immortality is a necessity to vindicate the rectitude and benevolence of the divine character and government in the unequal distributions of rewards and punishments in the present life. Man comes into this world a helpless and imperfect being without any volition on his part. He spends his infancy in obedience to his mere animal instincts, and his childhood and youth are for the most part spent in folly and sin; and from the cradle he is not infrequently doomed to uninterrupted disappointment, and bodily and mental suffering. “He is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward,” and these come alike to the virtuous and the vicious. If God is just and His government is founded in rectitude, and His providences are directed by equal and benevolent laws, we might reasonably suppose that men would prosper in life, and be exempted from trouble, affliction and sorrow, according as they were righteous; and that on the

other hand, they would be rendered unprosperous, and suffer loss and sorrow in proportion to their sins. There can, in reality, be no even-handed justice—no impartial equity, where this principle of government is not consistently and perfectly carried out.

But no such law, as a perfect, general, and un-deviating rule, can be traced in the divine administration in the present world. Though the vicious often suffer the consequence of their conduct, and the good often reap the peaceable fruits of virtue, yet we cannot turn and discern between the righteous and the wicked, from any developments of providence in their external prosperity, sufferings or enjoyments. How often are the industrious and honest defeated in their plans, and their hard-earned wages wrested from them, by dishonesty and misfortune; while the dishonest, and intriguing, and unprincipled are seemingly successful in all their plans and efforts, and prosper as the evergreen, whose leaf no chilling frost, or blasting wind, or wintery storm withers? How often are modesty and real worth overlooked, or put down by popular clamor; while the officious, the conceited, the proud and vicious are courted and exalted to places of trust and power? How many virtuous and pious poor pine in solitude and want and neglect; while luxury, sensuality and prodigality revel amid princely grandeur and dishonest gain, in the mansions of the wicked?

Then, think of the injured rights of the poor. I am aware that many people are responsible for their

own poverty. By lack of ambition, effort and economy they are living without the share of this world's goods which they might otherwise have had. But, on the other hand, the iron heel of greed and wealth has crushed many of the poor until there was no chance to succeed. And if the Creator has given this world to its inhabitants, as a place of residence, and as affording a means of sustenance, He has given it to all alike, to be used as their relations demand or necessities require. Each has inalienable rights, which cannot be taken away or disregarded except to his injury. Whether or not these rights have been respected and realized needs no inspiration to tell. The poor and feeble in all ages have been oppressed, and no redress has been obtained during the period of this life. Then we ask, are these wrongs to be righted? They certainly are not in this life, for they are often continued to its close.

Men do not receive their full rewards or punishment in this life. Many times the innocent are punished and the guilty go free. Human life is too brief to exemplify divine justice. Here Paul is in the prison and Nero is on the throne. The girl in the gutter dies a death of shame, and her betrayer moves in a circle of high society.

These and other unnumbered inequalities in the administration of providence, have often exceedingly perplexed the minds of the wise and good in every age, and have sometimes led men to doubt or deny the existence of a superintending, directing God, in

the affairs of men. Holy men of old felt, in their own experience, the full force of these perplexing difficulties. The Psalmist says, "But as for me my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped; when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Psalm 73:2, 3. Jeremiah says, 12:1, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins." Habakkuk says 1:13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?"

Now, who that leaves out of view a future life can solve these difficulties, in the government of a just and benevolent God? Who can show that there is rectitude, wisdom, or goodness in the Creator, if it is the whole of life to live only amid the inequalities, trials and sufferings of the present world? The anxious mind says, there must be another life, if God is just and good—a life where all that is at present discordant and unequal shall be harmonized, and adjusted to principles of strictest equity. Such a life of immortality is essential to vindicate the character of God in His dealings with men.

VII. DIVINE REVELATION DECLARES THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

Every man who has read the Bible to any extent, be he materialist, skeptic or Christian, must acknowledge that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is taught more or less explicitly in every part of the book. Without it, revelation is an unmeaning mockery and a mass of contradictions. For the present we assume that God's Word is the foundation of all our knowledge regarding the future, and the source of all the hope that irradiates the gloomy passage of the grave.

It is a common saying, but a true one, that nature and revelation are harmonious. It is so in regard to the question under discussion. What reason infers and nature symbolizes, the Bible clearly declares. Life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel.

The Scriptures inform us that man was created by God and placed in a condition which insured to him, if he had retained that condition, both a blessed and immortal existence; that by his own fault he lost that condition, and with it the blessedness of immortality, and as a result became subject to temporal, spiritual and eternal death. But even this eternal death involves the idea of an eternal being. In the meantime, it pleased God not to leave man in this wretched condition, but to deliver him from it, providing he would meet certain conditions, by bestowing upon him an immortal existence of blessed-

ness, after his body had been raised from the grave and had been reunited to his soul. If Adam, our first parent, was created an immortal being, then the immortality of the soul can no longer be questioned.

The language of the Old Testament pre-supposes the immortality of the soul. Patriarch after patriarch rejoiced in the hope. The translation of Enoch and Elijah, and "the gathering to his people" of one aged saint after another, indicates a universal belief in life after death. Abraham expected "a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God." Moses endured "as seeing Him who was invisible, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." David said, "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Isaiah says, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they rise." Solomon declares his belief in the doctrine, in the well known words of Ecclesiastes: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Similar testimony might be given from every book of the Old Testament, demonstrating conclusively that the doctrine of the soul's immortality was not only taught by Old Testament writers, and sung by every Bible bard from creation downward,

but also believed in and appropriated in all the changes and circumstances of their lives.

When we come to the New Testament Scriptures, the doctrine as might be expected, is still more clearly enunciated. It is not here treated as an abstract theory, but as a consequence of Christ's death and resurrection. Paul speaks of “the eternal weight of glory” laid up in heaven—“a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Peter in glowing language, describes the lively hope begotten in believers by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, “to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away.” The beloved John, possessed with the assurance and glorious prospect of changing this poor mortal life for a changeless existence, but unable to describe it, says: “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.”

But someone says, “I do not believe in God and therefore do not believe in the Bible as a divine revelation.” But, friend, even upon the supposition of Atheism itself, it is not possible to prove that man is not immortal; nor even render probable that he is not. For, even supposing that there is no God, it is still certain that we exist, and if we exist here, and as we are, without any God, there is no reason why we may not exist hereafter also, without any God. If man has an independent existence, without means

exterior to himself, then the end and means of his existence are in and from himself, and his annihilation is therefore impossible in the very nature of the case.

VIII. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

One of the great, if not the greatest, arguments presented in the New Testament in favor of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, is the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ.

We find in Matthew 27:62-64 that the "Chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, AFTER THREE DAYS I WILL RISE AGAIN. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." And hence when his dead body was laid in the tomb, the door was sealed with the Roman seal and every precaution was taken to guard that body and the most watchful vigilance was exercised, in order to decide the fact whether that body, which died and was laid in the grave, should continue there lifeless, beyond the specified time, or rise to life again as predicted.

It was a time of deep anxiety and suspense. The powers of light and darkness were watching the result. The soldiers silently paraded about the tomb,

and the chief priests and Pharisees, anticipating a triumph, awaited the issue with deep and anxious emotion. Hour after hour rolled away. The first and the second nights were passed, and all was still. But thank God, “on that third morning he illuminated the dark inclosure of the tomb with his resurrection glory, snapped asunder the bands of death, broke the Roman seal and came forth a conqueror over death, hell and the grave.” That body that lay in the tomb was reanimated and reunited to the immortal part which went with the soul of the penitent thief into paradise on the day of his death and was alive again.

Of the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is the most ample proof. There are the empty tomb and the discarded grave clothes. Then there are the various appearances of Christ after the resurrection. Fourteen separate times apparently did He appear to individuals or groups of individuals. And He said, “Because I live ye shall live also.” Then again He said, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

Christ has become the hero of the race. The Greek hero, Theseus, slew the bloody Minotaur and ended forever the sacrifice of Athenian youth. The Anglo-Saxon hero, Beowulf, triumphed over the monsters of the fens and freed his people from disease. But Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, triumphed over death and thus has become the Hero of the open grave.

The resurrection of Jesus is a divine guarantee of immortality. Because He lives, we know that we shall live again. "There is a fable which relates the story of a fox hard-pressed by the hunters and coming to the mouth of a great cave. According to the cunning custom of his kind he studied the situation. He observed the tracks of many foxes leading into the cavern, and inferred that others had sought refuge there; but he noted, too, that while the tracks were numerous, they were all leading one way. They were all pointing inward. None led out. Shrewdly judging that, while he might easily enter, the chances were that the cave held some devouring monster which would destroy him, he passed on in search of other refuge."

The old fable suggests the situation of the human race. Hard pressed in the great conflict of life, we are confronted by a dark and gloomy cavern which men call death. But unlike the fox we have no option, we must enter whether we want to or not. And we are told that the tracks are leading but one way, and that it is indeed the "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns." On and on moves the vast concourse of humanity, whose hearts like muffled drums, are beating funeral dirges to the grave. And none come back to tell us how they fare. Now, if all ended here we would be hopeless and miserable. Our hopes would go to the tomb. But, as Victor Hugo said, "A tomb is not a blind alley but a thoroughfare—it closes with the twilight and opens

with the dawn.” Catch the gleam of the rising Sun on Easter morning! As the day begins to dawn we see tracks leading both ways! We see the footprints of the blessed Lord coming from the tomb! He is alive forever more! And he says, “Because I live, ye shall live also!” The resurrection of Jesus assures us of life after death.

IX. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL NECESSITATES
A HEAVEN AND A HELL

If we are immortal, and all religious denominations say we are, and the universal belief of all nations, the powers of the human mind, the analogy of nature, the inequalities of providence, reason, revelation and the resurrection of Jesus unite in supporting their claims, then we are certainly fixing eternal destinies far removed from each other. For we know that if God’s government is founded upon the plane of justice and equity, each individual will have an eternal destiny in correspondence to his earthly conduct.

All men are either good or evil. All men are moral agents. It follows, then, if men are good or evil they are such as a matter of choice—voluntarily good or voluntarily evil. Indeed there is no other kind of good or evil. If this be true, again it follows, if one man be voluntarily good it gives him actual merit. If another be voluntarily evil, it gives him actual demerit. If one man possesses merit he de-

serves a reward; if another man possesses demerit he deserves punishment. Now simple justice requires that they both shall have their deservings." It naturally follows that in eternity, there must be a place of reward, for those possessing merit, and a place of punishment for those possessing demerit. According to the teaching of the Word of God, heaven is to be the eternal home of the saints, those possessing merit and deserving reward, while hell is to be the eternal doom of the unsaved, those with demerit, deserving punishment. If the Bible is clear on any subject it is on this. It reveals a land of heavenly bliss and a hell of dark, dismal and tormenting despair.

The saint's long dream of heaven is not an idle fancy. "It is not the relic of some crude superstition made obsolete by modern science and investigation. The old fashioned heaven as revealed in the Bible and as taught us at the most sacred of all earthly shrines—Mother's knee, is one of the sweetest of all faith's treasures." In these days of materialism, we need to catch a new vision of the biblical truth of heaven.

When we turn to the Bible and read the descriptive passages concerning heaven our hearts are ravished with glory. We see a city not made with hands nor hoary with the years of time. A city whose resources have never been appraised and whose inhabitants have never been numbered. A city without griefs and graves, without sins and sorrows. A city with ever open gates and one eternal day.

Heaven is a city where we will not be submitted to the test of sinful environment. There shall be no sin there. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." The angel at every gate has his charge: "Let none enter here that are unholy." Thank God we will not only be done with sin, but sinful environment, when we reach the "City of Gold."

Heaven is a place entirely free from sorrow. In this world "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Even Jesus while here "Was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But of the inhabitants of heaven it is written, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." "In heaven they never mar the hillsides with spades, for they dig no graves there. They never telephone for the doctor, for nobody gets sick. In heaven nobody carries a handkerchief, for nobody cries. In heaven they never "phone for the undertaker, for nobody dies. No sorrow, no aching limbs, no throbbing temples, no darting pains, no swelling tongues, no sinking eyes and no more tears."

Heaven is a place of glorified reunions. We have our homecomings and our family reunions here, and such occasions are always looked forward to with anxious expectation of meeting loved ones from whom we have been separated for some months or

years; but, after a few happy hours together, we must say, "Good-by" and separate to the call of duty. Not long ago I left my mother standing in the door of her home weeping. I was leaving for a number of months' work in the whitened harvest fields of the Master. How hard for us both was the parting that day. As I turned and waved a last good-by I seemed to be saying, "Mother,"

"I hear a voice you cannot hear
That will not let me stay;
I see a hand you cannot see
That beckons me away."

But think of the glorious reunions in heaven, where we will meet ne'er to part again. The bereaved wife will meet the husband for whom she so long mourned. The orphan child will be caressed by the mother who has been years in glory. How our hearts have bled for the sweet little child removed from us in all the beauty and innocence of infancy. But we will meet again. "We shall meet and greet our loved ones."

But greater than the beauties of heaven, the glad reunions with loved ones and friends, the seeing of the angels, will be to see our Lord. He who has redeemed us from our sins, "and made us kings and priests unto God" and hear him say, "Come ye blessed." That will be the greatest joy of heaven. Then shall we fall upon our faces and worship him who left the courts of glory for a world of sin, the songs of angels for the temptations of devils, a throne of glory for a cross of agony, all this,

that He might save sinful humanity like us. Thank God, for the glorious hope of heaven, held out to the child of God, by the Bible. "I want to go there, I do."

But the same Bible that tells us of the joys of heaven tells us of the terrors of hell. The inspired prophets teach that there is a hell. Jesus Christ teaches beyond the shadow of a doubt the existence of a hell. The soul of man being immortal forces us to believe in hell. We know that the saved and the unsaved will not have the same final destiny.

When we read from the sacred pages of revelation, we see that hell is a place terrible beyond description. It is a place of extreme suffering. In Rev. 20:10 we find that the lost are tormented day and night forever and ever. Rev. 21:8 speaks of a lake "which burneth with fire and brimstone." Jesus in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel draws aside the curtain and shows us a man in eternity that was tormented in the flames of hell. Another picture in Rev. 14, shows us that the lost shall "have no rest day nor night." We can call this figurative language if we want to; but we can not dispose of these Scriptures by simply saying they are figurative. God is no liar and God's figures do not overstate the facts. I would no more take a half hour trying to prove that the fire of hell is a literal fire, any more than I would try to prove that the gold of heaven is literal gold. I believe that when God says gold He means gold and when He says fire He means fire.

Hell is also a place of gnawing appetite and of unsatisfied tormenting desire. Men create abnormal desires here and try to satisfy them and in some measure succeed. But in hell men will be consumed with undying desire, eternally intensified, but eternally unsatisfied. Here men will work hard for food, murder for money, and waste their bodies with toil and pain for pleasure. In hell they will have all their desires but no means to gratify them. Those who reject God and continue in sin are developing passions and appetites that will torment them without gratification through all eternity.

Whatever else hell may be it is the mad house of eternity, where the unrepentant suffer the remorse of an accusing memory. The rich man in torment lifted up his voice in hell and cried, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me." To this Abraham replied, "Son, remember." His riches were left behind but his memory he had brought with him to hell. You men and women who continue in sin until you die, will not have much you can take to hell with you; but you will take your memory. You will remember neglected opportunities. You will remember the times you turned aside the Spirit of God. Oh, the torture in hell of an accusing memory.

Hell is a place of infinite terror of soul. When the unsaved get to hell, it is the memory of their sins and lost opportunities, the remorse of an accusing conscience, the gnawing of an unsatisfied appetite,

the desire of an ungratified passion, that produce the terror of soul.

Hell is eternal in its duration. Once behind the sweltering walls of hell you are lost without hope. Heart rending repentance, and millions of agonizing prayers will avail nothing. The sinner in hell will seek death, but death will flee from him. All around is that black world of woe. "He is stung by fiery serpents that are sired in the black dungeons of dark damnation and as they crawl and spurt their venom and sting him he screams for mercy that never comes." This appalling condition will last forever. The terrors of hell will be an everlasting now.

X. THE CLOSING APPEAL

And now, dear reader, just one closing word. If any man is banished to hell, and there suffers its torments, it will not be because God is unkind, unloving or cruel. Neither will it be because it is the wish of God. There is not a soul in hell, neither will there ever be a soul in hell, because God chose or elected its damnation. God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God is doing all that He can possibly do to keep humanity from that awful doom. He calls today, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" But the iniquities of men have separated them from their God and hope of heaven. God says, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." If men will not obey the

laws of this country what is there for them but the prison? And if men will not obey God, and reject Jesus and push aside salvation, as offered on the terms of the gospel, what else is there for them but the prison house of hell?

Jesus came "that we might have life." "He was wounded for our transgressions." "He died for the ungodly." "He tasted death for every man." And, reader, will you not just now yield your heart to Him? Will you not let Him come into your heart and save you? Your soul is priceless, being immortal. And since you are immortal, and will live somewhere after death—will you not choose for Jesus and heaven? Will you not do it NOW? May the blessings of God be upon the reader is the prayer of the writer.

47 29110 7721
08/09 FS 52292-13
UR
Group
size