

THE SOUL, NOT THE BODY, BROUGHT FORTH FROM THE TOMB

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." – Acts 24:15.

WHEN we consider that for centuries people have been accustomed to confusion in respect to the teachings of Scripture, it is natural that the question should be asked, What proof have we that it is not the body that sleeps in death, and that meantime the soul has not passed on to the higher realms? The answer is that in the Word of God we find no suggestion that such is the case. The Bible says nothing about the resurrection of the body, but much about the soul. Repeatedly the Word of God calls death a sleep. Every night the body sleeps, if it is in good condition; and this natural sleep of the body is Scripturally used to illustrate the condition of all who die the Adamic death.

In order to get the matter clear in our minds we must go back to the beginning and see what the soul is. First of all we read in the Genesis account (1:27) that God created *man* – not man's *body*, but *man*. The question then arises, What is man?

We answer, Man is not so much *avoirduois*, but an intelligent being, a personality. What God formed out of the dust of the earth was not man, but merely a form, or body, that would be made into man. Then into its nostrils God breathed "the breath of lives" – the Hebrew term signifying the breath or vitality common to all animal beings. It was not a special kind of life different from that which the lower animals have; on the contrary, it was the same kind of life given to fish, fowl and beasts – the power to live.

The same kind of life is carried forward in the human family that is carried forward in beasts. This vitality common to all animal

creatures infuses the body and thus energizes it. The difference between man and the lower animals is that while they have the same kind of life man has the superior brain. Man's head is shaped differently; therefore he can think of subjects about which the lower animals cannot think, because he has a better brain. A man with a head of a given shape cannot think with the same breadth of mind as a man with a better shaped head – a man who is less fallen. Some have lost more, others less, of the original perfection, of the original intelligence, given man in his creation.

A CANDLE AS AN ILLUSTRATION

A careful examination of the Genesis account of man's creation reveals the fact that when the breath came into the body which God had formed out of the dust of the ground, the *combination* produced *soul*, sentient being, with personality. The body in itself has no personality, the breath of life has no power, no sentient being, but when the two came together, they produced sentient being.

Perhaps the best illustration of the thought is afforded by a candle. The candle is composed of tallow or wax and wick. The flame is produced by an outside power – the spark of fire. When the spark is applied to the wick, the air begins to combine with the wax or the tallow, and the result is light.

Let the candle represent the body, the air represent the breath of life – vitality – and the flame the being, the personality. God alone can strike the match – create the human being. This life which came from God in the beginning was given to Adam upon certain conditions, certain restrictions; namely, it was to continue forever if man remained obedient to God, but if he was disobedient God would take his life from him.

Adam was disobedient, and his soul was sentenced to death. (Ezekiel 18:4,20.) It was not the body that sinned and was

sentenced to death, while the soul remained pure. On the contrary, "The soul that sinneth *it* shall die." The sentence of death pronounced upon Adam affected his *soul*. As it was the spark of life that *produced* the soul, so the taking away of the spark of life *extinguished* the soul. To revert to the illustration of the candle: If some one blow upon it, the flame will be extinguished; thus is produced an adverse condition.

But before Father Adam died, before the flame of life was fully extinguished, he had imparted the spark of life to his children; and these in turn imparted the spark of life to theirs. Thus the spark of life has been transmitted from generation to generation. In the illustration, if before we say, "I will blow out the light of that candle," it has been used to light other candles, the extinguishing of the flame of the *first* candle will not affect the *others*. But the fact that the transmitted spark of life was impaired is evident; for whereas Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years under adverse conditions, his children as a rule could not live nearly so long, thirty-three years now being the average life-time.

IN WHAT SENSE THE DEAD SLEEP

Everywhere the Scriptures state that it is the *soul* that is *dying*. The question then might arise, If the soul dies, what hope of a future life has mankind? The Bible answers that from the beginning God foreknew all that would happen, and that already in His Plan He had made arrangements whereby there would be a resuscitation, **[R5611 : page 20]** a re-quickening, of these human souls that have died. Nothing is beyond His knowledge or His power. Nowhere does He say that there will be a re-quickening of the body, but of the soul.

The Sadducees of Jesus' day did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. When, therefore, they heard that Jesus had said that all in the graves would ultimately hear His voice and come forth, they disputed His statement as foolish. Coming to Him with a

proposition which they thought would expose the fallacy of His teachings, they said to Him, Suppose a woman had seven husbands, all of whom died before she did, whose wife would she be in the resurrection? – Luke 20:27-40.

Jesus replied that they erred because they neither understood the Scriptures nor appreciated the Power of the Almighty. He reiterated His statement that there would be a resurrection of the dead, and reminded them that God had so implied in His message to Moses at the burning bush, when He said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." The Master's argument is that this statement is of itself a proof of the resurrection; for God surely would not refer thus to beings forever blotted out of existence; that God's purpose of a resurrection is fixed, unalterable, and that those whom men call dead "all live unto Him" – from God's standpoint they are asleep, and not destroyed. The Word of God therefore speaks of the dead as sleeping.

Throughout the Old Testament we read that different ones were gathered to their fathers or that they slept with their fathers. Did the body sleep? No, it was absolutely dead – returned to the dust from which it was created. What was it, then, that slept? That which slept was that which God recognized as the personality – the soul. The souls of both good and bad slept; for it is written that "there shall be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust."

Abraham's fathers were not saintly men, but heathen. He was called out from amongst his kindred to be a servant of God. When Abraham was gathered to his fathers in death he went to the same place where they were – Sheol in the Old Testament, Hades in the New – the tomb, the death state. Of all the kings of Israel, good and bad, and of the Prophets, we read that they were gathered to their fathers. They are asleep in death.

POINTS NOT USUALLY NOTICED

When Jesus entered the room where the young daughter of Jairus lay dead, He declared, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth." He did not say that she was in Heaven or in Purgatory or in Hell. He spoke in the same way about Lazarus, saying, "Lazarus sleepeth." His disciples replied, "If he sleep, he shall do well." They had not understood the Master's words. Finally Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead....Nevertheless, let us go unto him." So they went to the tomb where Lazarus was.

When Jesus met Martha and Mary, He did not tell them that Lazarus was in Heaven, with a harp in his hands, etc. – nothing of the kind. What He said was, "Thy brother shall rise again"; thy brother shall live again. Martha replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last Day" – the great Day, the Seventh Thousand-Year Day, the Day of Christ's Kingdom, when all the dead will be due to come forth. To encourage her, Jesus said, "*I* am the Resurrection and the Life" – there will be no resurrection except by My power – why not ask Me now? But Martha did not get the thought; for Jesus said, "Where have ye laid him?"

Martha and Mary took our Lord to where Lazarus was. When Jesus gave command that the stone be rolled away from the tomb, Martha protested, saying that since her brother had then been dead four days, corruption must have set in. We read that Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth" – out of the cave where he had been laid. Jesus did not say, Lazarus, come down from Heaven, nor did He say, Lazarus, come up from below. – John 11:1-46.

Lazarus was a *very* dead man; for he had died four days before Jesus came. Yet from the Divine standpoint he was asleep, as the Master declared; that is to say, his soul was not destroyed. According to the Scriptures, the soul can be put out of existence. On one occasion our Lord said to His disciples, "Fear not them [R5612 : page 20] that kill the body, but are not able to kill

the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna" – the Second Death. – Matthew 10:28.

WHAT CHRIST'S DEATH ACCOMPLISHED

The soul is that individuality which God has decreed shall have an opportunity of coming to a knowledge of everlasting life. All this opportunity is in Christ. As St. Paul says, "For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Romans 14:9.) He lived as a man, and died that He might thereby have the right to control all those who have gone into the prisonhouse of death. Therefore the Scriptures tell us that there *must* be a resurrection of the dead.

Our Lord says that *all* will hear His voice and come forth from the tomb. (John 5:28,29.) In 1 Corinthians 15, St. Paul explains how this can be. He points out that the death of Christ is for all: "As all in Adam die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive – every man in his own order." Then he proceeds to show that the first to come forth will be the Church class. He also declares that if there is no resurrection of the dead, our preaching is vain and our hope is gone. He concludes that since Christ is *risen from the dead* there is therefore an *assurance* of the *resurrection*.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

The restoration of the bodies of the billions who have died would be a very absurd proposition. Scientists tell us that the human frame changes once in every seven years; that continually old matter is being replaced with new, so that a man who has reached the age of forty-nine years has had seven bodies during his lifetime. The change of the body did not affect the personality of the man, however. The sloughing off of a hand or a foot or the loss of an eye might have taken place, but the human soul continues; for it is this intelligent human being that has resulted from the union of matter

and vitality. God's proposition is the restoration of this *soul*, this personality. Never does He speak of the resurrection of the *body*.

The theory of the resurrection of the body has involved theologians in many difficulties. Some years ago a story went the rounds of the newspapers to the effect that the coffin of a man who had been buried at the foot of an apple tree had been unearthed, and the discovery made that the roots of the tree had penetrated the coffin and absorbed the body, and that at these roots there was something resembling a hand, an arm, a human limb, etc. In other words, the tree had been living upon that human body. The apples from that tree had been sold to various persons and shipped in all directions; some had been fed to hogs, etc. Those who hold to the theory of the resurrection of the body would have a knotty problem to solve in trying to fit their theory to these facts.

There is not one statement in the Bible that declares **[R5612 : page 21]** that the same body that dies is to be brought forth in the resurrection. On the contrary we read, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it pleaseth Him." He will have no difficulty in making a body; Divine Power is equal to any emergency. The Sadducees doubted the Power of God.

A STUPENDOUS MIRACLE

We admit that to produce a body with the same convolutions of the brain, the same individuality, the same soul, the same sentient being, is a miracle so great that we cannot conceive of it. Yet it is that very thing which God purposes to do for the whole human family – thousands of millions in number.

It is for us to follow the Word of God, to reject all extraneous matter from whatever quarter it may come, and to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to make us wise." We are to discard the things which are without Scriptural authority.

Nothing that man can offer can compare with what we find in the Word of God; the Bible is the very essence of grandeur, beauty, justice, love.

In Isaiah's prophecy we read that Jesus "poured out His *soul* unto death," that His *soul* was made "an offering for sin." (Isaiah 53:12,10.) Then again we read, "Thou wilt not leave My *soul* in Sheol [the grave]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm 16:10.) Explaining this prophecy, the Apostle Peter says that God would not leave Jesus' *soul* in Hades – the grave. (Acts 2:22-31.) The soul of Jesus was not left in the tomb.

Speaking of His own resurrection, Jesus said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am *alive* forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18.) God raised Him up from the death condition on the third day. On the very morning of His resurrection He said to Mary, "Touch Me not; for I have not yet ascended to My Father....I ascend to My Father, and your Father, and to My God and your God." (John 20:17.) He was the first One who descended to the tomb, and was raised from the dead, and who has ascended far above angels, principalities, powers, and every name that is named. – Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11.

Since our Lord has passed through these experiences, the Apostle's suggestion is that He who brought the Lord Jesus from the tomb is also able to bring us. He tells us that we need not sorrow as do those who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, let us believe that He will bring all that are in the death condition back to life. (1 Thessalonians 4:13,14.) Let us believe that "all who are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:25-29) – the Church first. As it is written, "Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the First Resurrection; on such the Second Death shall have no power; but they shall be priests of God

and of Christ; and shall reign with Him a thousand years."
– Revelation 20:6.

Others shall come forth to a resurrection over whom the Second Death may have power. Whether or not they will ever get altogether free from death will be determined by their conduct during the time of their opportunity – during the time when the riches of God's grace will be made known to them and when they will have the opportunity of coming back into full harmony with Him and of gaining life everlasting.

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