

STARTLING FACTS

A Suggestive Consideration of the Current Theological Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, from the Standpoint of the Scriptures.

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SUBJECT--THE IMMORTAL SOUL OF NEITHER ADAM NOR ANY OF HIS POSTERITY COULD HAVE PASSED OUT OF THEIR BODIES TO HEAVEN IF ADAM HAD NOT SINNED AND BROUGHT DEATH INTO THE WORLD.—Gen. i: 2.

We have been taught to believe that man is an immortal being—that the Lord God created the *body* of man of the dust of the ground and breathed an *immortal soul* into that body, and that this man became a “living” or “immortal” soul. Assuming this to be true, we go on in the divine record, and find that the Lord God put the man into the garden of Eden and commanded him, saying: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt *surely DIE.*” or in the strict rendering of the Hebrew, “dying thou shalt die.” *Death*, we have been instructed to believe, is the separation of *soul* and *body*; therefore the *penalty* threatened Adam, in case of disobedience, was the separation of his *soul* from his *body*. Now, then, assuming this also to be correct, and that God had prepared a place of happiness—a *heaven* for the repose of the souls of Adam and others, we proceed to inquire *how* and *when* the immortal soul of Adam would get to heaven? Certainly not so long as he remained obedient to his Maker. Do not be startled by this proposition. Adam would not die (or experience the separation of soul and body) until *he disobeyed*, and there can be no other way for souls to get to heaven except *through death*. There is no evading this conclusion but by denying that *literal* death is any part of the penalty imposed on Adam for transgression.

Now, in view of these facts, is it not apparent that there is a *wrong* somewhere? Either the divine record does not harmonize with itself or else our theories do not harmonize with it. Our theories in which we have been educated are, that an immortal soul was put into a mortal body, that death is the separation of soul and body, and the Bible says that the man was commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest he die, when, according to our theories, there was no *other way* that a soul could get to heaven but through death, and Adam would not, so long as he remained obedient; so that Adam had actually to become a sinner in order to go to heaven! But it may be said, Adam might go to heaven bodily without dying. Suppose he might, then what follows? How does that affect the question of the immortality of the soul? It would prove that the soul *never was intended to live out of the body*, and is *fatal* to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and its ascension to heaven at death.

Now God threatened man with death if he sinned, and there is no other way that the soul could get to heaven but through death; and he would not die if he did not sin. This fact proves to an absolute certainty that God never intended that man should go to heaven or live out of his body; hence the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is a false doctrine!

If the death of the body is not the penalty attaching to men on account of sin, pray, why do men die at all, and what does the death of the body mean? What is its place in God's arrangement?

We now put forth this query: Is it possible that man could obtain a greater good by *sin* than by *obedience*? Impossible! And yet, if the doctrine of the ascension of the souls of the righteous to heaven at death is true, then man *did* obtain a vastly greater good by sin than he could have obtained by obedience. Such a doctrine is blasphemous. It sets a premium on sin. It says substantially to Adam; “You shall never rise to that glorious state of happiness in heaven for which you were created while you *obey* me; but when you *disobey*, then your soul shall be separated from your earthly body, and it will become possible for it to wing its way to ‘realms of bliss and light.’”

This is the Christianity that is popular in this nineteenth century, and those who do not believe it are held up as “infidels!” Was there ever such a turning of things upside down since man existed?

But here comes another difficulty. The punishment is *death*, and death, we are told, is the *separation of* soul and body; now, by what authority is *torment of the soul* added after death? Can a judge sentence a criminal to suffer what was not specified in the law? Such a sentence would be unjust. What if the judge who tried a murderer the other day had sentenced him to be hung, and then that his body should be fastened to a team of horses and dragged around the city until there should be nothing left of it? “Horrible!” you say. Yet, what is that to eternal torment? Such a penalty could not be carried into effect. Why not? Because there is no provision in the law for such a penalty.

The penalty for man's transgression was *death*. “Dying thou shalt die.” After that there could be no further punishment; anything more would exceed the penalty and be unjust and unlawful; hence when Adam's soul had left his body the law was satisfied and man ceased to be punished. And now, what is there to hinder his enjoying the happiness of heaven to all eternity, and that, too, *without repentance or holiness*?

We proceed now to draw some conclusions. The doctrine that man obtained a greater good by disobedience than he could by obedience is *not true*, and therefore the doctrine that men pass into a state of felicity *when they die* must be a false doctrine; and as the only way to heaven lies through sin, therefore men do not go to heaven, for sinners may not enter there.

Again, death ought to be dreaded as an “enemy,” because the fear of it was designed to *deter from sin*. Then it cannot be as the poet sings: “The gate to endless joy2’—”and yet we dread to enter there.” Yes, nature is true to the fitness of things and dreads death. Another poet says: “Why do we mourn for dying friends and shake at death’s alarms? ‘Tis but the voice that Jesus sends to call them to His arms.” Why then mourn for Adam when dying? “Oh, because he sinned.” Yes, but might he not have repented long ago and been forgiven, and now Jesus sends and calls him to “His arms.” But the law says, “Thou shalt surely die,” as a *punishment*, while the orthodoxy of the nineteenth century says. “Death is not a *curse*, which man drew down upon himself by his disobedience, but is a blessing, without which *life itself* would be a curse.”---“Rev.” P. H. Hedge. How strange is orthodoxy! Both these doctrines cannot be true. What, then, is the truth on these subjects?

THE TRUTH

is, as recorded in Gen. ii: 7: “The Lord God formed *man* of the *dust* of the ground,” and *the man* that was made of the dust of the ground was *the man* that became a living soul, and not the breath that God breathed into him. Paul quotes this passage to prove that the living soul is the natural body—I. Cor. xv: 44. 45. But one inquires: “What does the word *soul* mean? It does not mean the fancied immortal soul, but it does mean the man, the *person*. Examples can be adduced to any extent required to prove this. See Gen. xlii: 26, xii: 13, xix: 20; Psa. cxvi, 8; Lev. xvii: 10, 12; Acts ii: 41; II. Pet. iii: 20, etc. Ezekiel says: “The *soul* that sinneth **IT** shall die.” This is not spiritual death. What is spiritual death? Alienation from God by sin. The soul, then, that is alienated from God by sin *shall* die. We must not confound the sin with the penalty.

The *soul*, then, means the man, and not man’s breath. We now find that the Lord God took the man that he had made of the dust of the ground and placed him in the garden of Eden, and commanded him, saying: “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Death is the cessation of life. This living *soul*, then, that could *eat*, was threatened with death if disobedient. The serpent said unto the woman, “ye shall not surely die,” but instead of dying ye shall become as “gods.” Even the serpent did not pretend that man would go to heaven if he *did die*, but argued that he would *not* die. We follow the history of the fall, and find that man did disobey and was called to account, found guilty and sentenced *according to the law*, and here we have the penalty defined by the Lord God himself: ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’” But the man, not knowing anything of the doctrine of his soul going to heaven at death, must be driven out of the garden of Eden, “lest he take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever.” He, like the people nowadays, wanted medicine to keep him from dying, and if he had eaten of that tree man never would have died and gone to heaven at all. We pass on to the sequel. Adam “lived nine hundred and thirty years and he died.” The day in which he died was not a twenty-four hour day. “One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” and there is a time called ‘to-day’ that has lasted more than eighteen

centuries and is not ended yet (Heb. iii: 13). Now, as it is testified that Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years before he died, it follows that he did not die in the day of twenty-four hours in which he sinned.

This, then, is a straightforward story. Adam was a mortal man. He transgressed and died. He ceased to live anywhere. Death is *not* the separation of soul and body, but is the cessation of life of the living soul that was formed of the dust of the ground, and we challenge all Christendom to prove the contrary.

Adam sinned and brought death upon all his posterity. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death *by* sin, and so death passed UPon all men.” Man, then, in death, is lost, ruined, returned to dust; and if there is no reproducing the man from dust again death is an *eternal sleep*. But the Deity has devised (so to speak) a scheme of salvation—not by taking the immortal soul to heaven, but by a resurrection from the dead. The phrase resurrection *from* the dead presupposes that the race of man is dead or is to die, and that a certain portion, not all, are to be recovered or saved by being raised out of the common ruin, leaving the rest of the human family (with the exception of those who are condemned at the judgment-seat of Christ—Rom. xiv: 10, 12; **11**. Cor. v: 10) in the same condition of death they would have been in if there had been no salvation for any of the human race.

That salvation pertains *exclusively to the body*, consult the following passages: Rom. viii: 23; Phil. iii: 21; **1**. Cor. xv: 53.

We see, therefore, that *resurrection* is not the exaltation of the supposed immortal soul to a *high sphere at death*—a sort of spiritual, not real, resurrection; but resurrection is the reforming of the man from dust again, and cannot possibly be anything else.

Having now shown most conclusively that man is mortal—that all there is of him returns to dust, and that his *only hope of salvation* is in resurrection—we ought not to leave the subject without answering the question, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ Salvation is predicated on a belief of the gospel and obedience to it in baptism for the remission of sins (Mark xvi: 16; Acts ii: 38) and faithfully following the teachings of the Scriptures to the end of life. But the belief of something instead of the true gospel will not do (Gal. i: 8). The gospel is good news, not of immortal souls saved in heaven, but of the kingdom of God (Matt. iv: 23; Acts xx: 25), when Jesus shall reign on the earth on the re-established throne of his father David (Luke **i**: 32; Acts ii: 39), with his apostles reigning with Him over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix: 28), and the saints possessing the kingdom under the whole heaven (Dan. vii: 14, 27; Rev. ii: 26). Believe, then, *the gospel*, and obey it faithfully to the end, and your salvation is sure.