

the only self-existent being in the universe, all others are mutable. His immortality is eternal, unoriginated, undervived, but he has power to give immortality, and eternal life to whom he will.

We will now notice,

2. *The existence of the soul separate from the body.*

The general belief of the Christian church from the days of the apostles up to this time, has been, that when the body dies, the soul returns to God who gave it, and will be in a state of bliss or woe until the resurrection of the just and unjust. Yet there are others, who, from the frequent mention made in the scriptures of the dead sleeping in their graves until the resurrection, have imbibed the opinion, that the soul sleeps with the body, in an entire state of insensibility. Within the last twelve years, men of this sentiment, such as the Rev. George Stores, and others, have spared no pains in writing and vending books, pamphlets, newspapers, and the like, in support of the unconscious state of the soul between death and the resurrection, and the annihilation of the wicked. Also, a host of lecturers have peddled out these doctrines in connection with *Millerism*, to the distraction of many well meaning persons, who have a desire to know and believe the truth! The great question is, what do the scriptures teach on this important subject?

"Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered unto his people." Gen. 25: 8. He lived 175 years; just 100 years after he came to Canaan. First, he gave up the ghost. He died willingly, and resigned his spirit in the hands of that God who gave it. Second, "He was gathered to his people. His body was gathered to the congregation of the dead, and his soul to the congregation of the blessed." Mr. Henry, says on this passage, "Death gathers us to our people. Those that are our people while we live, whether the people of God, or the children of this world, are the people to whom death will gather us."

"And it came to pass, as her soul was departing, (for she died), that she called his name Bed-oni," i.e. *the son of my sorrows!* The death of Rachel is here called the departing of her soul, a separation, and not going into the grave, where Israel, her husband, laid her body. Gen. 35: 18. "O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." 1 Kings 17: 21; 22. This is the first account of any one who had died and been raised from the dead. Elijah was the first man on earth who had the power to work such a miracle.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." This is conclusive, it covers the whole ground. The soul does not die with the body; it can exist without it. The soul goes to God, as a judge, and will be made happy with the spirits in Paradise, or confined with the spirits in prison. "Jesus saith unto her, [Martha] I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." As the soul in its nature is spiritual, temporal death cannot effect its existence; that light which is lit up by the Holy Ghost in the soul of every true believer, through faith in Christ, shall never be extinguished.

"Behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him." Matt. 17: 3. Our limits will not admit of a detailed account of the transfiguration on one of the mountains of Gallilee. Moses and Elijah, from heaven, and Peter, James and John, were as-

sembled to behold the Saviour in all his divinity, and as he now appears in his glorified body. Elijah appeared in the same body that had been translated from earth to heaven. No doubt but Moses, who died on Mount Nebo, 1483 years before this time, and was buried in the land of Moab, appeared as much like himself as Elijah did. Now, if Moses could go to heaven without his body, then all the righteous dead have gone in like manner. "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom! And Jesus said unto him, verily (truly) I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Our Saviour expired on the cross about three o'clock in the afternoon. The Jews ended their solar days at sunset. Hence the soul of the converted malefactor must have met his Lord in Paradise immediately after the breaking of his legs, which was done just before sunset. (See Luke 23: 42, 43, and John 19: 32.) The state of the blessed is what our Lord here means. Heaven, where the tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God. Rev. 2: 7. The prayer of a dying sinner to a dying Saviour is answered.

"While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5: 6, 8. Here again the whole question is settled in the clearest possible manner. As soon as the saint dies, his spirit is present with the Lord. And where is the Lord? Ascended up to heaven. "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things." Acts 3: 21. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." With such a sentiment before us as this, who can opine for a moment that the inspired apostle had any other view, but in case of his martyrdom for the gospel, he would be put immediately in possession of his heavenly inheritance?

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," &c. "Abraham's bosom" was a Jewish phrase, signifying the paradise of God. This account of the rich man and Lazarus may be a parable, or real history. If a parable, the sentiment is clear, and shows what will be the state of the righteous and the wicked immediately after death. If history, it narrates what had actually taken place. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Mat. 22: 32. Abraham had been dead over 300 years when God spake to Moses out of the burning bush at Horeb. Our Lord confirms this truth, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." It therefore follows, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were living when God spake to Moses; and when Christ reproved the Sadducees, who did not believe in angels, spirits, or the resurrection.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Mat. 10: 28. Two distinct principles are here set forth. The body is killed, but the soul escapes; the mortal falls before a mortal arm, but the immortal soul is uninjured.

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 7: 59. Stephen was a man of truth, a man of faith, and full of the Holy Ghost. He not only saw the heavens open, but saw Christ at the right hand of God; but offered such a prayer to him, as he knew would be answered. "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." Or, I will commit my spirit—deposit my soul in thy hands. Another proof of the soul's separate existence when the body is dead.