

"Noah, a preacher of righteousness"—that they were, when this Apostle wrote, "spirits in prison." (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 17.) He spoke of his own body as a tabernacle, or covering, which he [his spirit] was about shortly to put off. (2 Pet. i. 13, 14.) Paul also says, that "to die is gain," and expresses "a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better," namely, than "to abide in the flesh." He also speaks of himself and his brethren as "willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (Phil. i. 21-23. 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. Rom. xiv. 9. 1 Thes. v. 10.)

I submit to the serious consideration of unprejudiced and sincere inquirers after truth, whether the plain proofs now adduced do not decisively shew that the part of Mr. B.'s scheme in which he maintains the unconscious state of the souls or spirits of the deceased is unscriptural. If so, surely his whole scheme may be justly regarded as directly opposed to the teachings of inspiration. By some, however, it may be deemed desirable that a few more of his numerous gross misapplications of terms and texts should be noticed.

1. Tim. vi. 16, where it is said of Deity, "Who only hath immortality," is cited, (p. 10.) as proving to a certainty that the souls or spirits of unregenerate persons are mortal, and die with their bodies. But if it prove this, it must likewise prove that the holy angels are mortal. While upright men, deriving their goodness from God, are frequently called "good," our Lord says, "None is good save One, that is God." (Matth. xix. 17.) These texts are obviously to be understood in the same way, as denoting that God alone possesses immortality and goodness in His own nature, and independently. But assuredly He can, and He does, impart them to other beings, as angels and men. Our author frequently refers to Rom.

ii. 7, where, according to the common version—good, but not infallible—persons are spoken of as "seeking for immortality," to prove that the souls or spirits of men are mortal. But he ought to know, that the word (*aphtharsia*) here rendered "immortality," properly denotes "incorruption," as it is translated in several passages in which it is distinguished from immortality; (see 1 Cor. xv. 42, 50, 53, 54.) and so it is correctly translated by Dean Alford in Rom. ii. 7 and 2 Tim. i. 10.

As the finally impenitent are not said in Scripture to have life in the future state, or "eternal life," Mr. B. infers that they will not exist. But this is a palpable error. As *life* is generally considered desirable, and *death* dreadful, these terms are often used, the former to denote *happiness* and the latter *misery*. So Moses says, "I have set before you this day life and death," adding the definition, "blessing and cursing" (Deut. xxx. 19.) So likewise Solomon says, "In the way of righteousness is life," or happiness, "and in the pathway thereof is no death," or misery. (Prov. xii. 22.) In like manner our Lord tells us. "A man's life"—evidently his happiness or enjoyment—"consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. (Luke xii. 15. Rom viii. 6. 1 Thes. iii. 8.) Pharaoh said respecting the *plague* of locusts, "Entreat the Lord that he may take away from me this death only." (Exod. x. 17) With us it is a common saying of persons in uncomfortable circumstances, "They do not *live*; they only *stay*." So Dr. Watts says:—

"And if at eighty we arrive,

"We rather sigh and grieve than live.

In accordance with the view now presented, it may be readily perceived, that when it is said of the unbeliever, "he shall not see life," (John iii. 36,) it does not mean that he will cease to