

BIBLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS CONCERNING MAN

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Preface

In the thoughts of man there are a great many questions which arise concerning himself. Some of these are highly important. So important indeed are they that the Word of God itself has recorded them. Nor is that all. This Word has not only recorded the questions, but it has also recorded the answers to the questions. And when the Word of God asks a question and answers it, then in the answer we have the absolute truth on that question, and there is an end of all disputes. There is left no room for controversy; for thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go." (Isa. 48:17) Therefore, whatever the Lord teaches is profitable teaching. Whether we believe it, or whether we like it or not makes no difference so far as the teaching is concerned. The teaching is profitable, and everything that conflicts with it is unprofitable. The way the Lord leads is the way that we should go, and to follow any other leading is to go in the way that we should go.

Chapter 1

Is Man Mortal or Immortal?

In the eighth Psalm and the fourth verse is this question, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" Of course there are more ways than one in which this question can be referred to man, but the thing about man upon which we wish now to bring it to bear is that of immortality. "What is man?" is he mortal or immortal? We have not far to go for an answer. "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (Job 4:17) "O Lord, Thou art our God: let not mortal man prevail against Thee." (2 Chr. 14:11, margin) Thus we find in answer to the question, that the Word of God calls man mortal, and everything that the Bible says directly about immortality is consistent with this answer.

Says the Word: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Tim. 1:17) Here it is shown that immortality is an attribute of God, equally with eternity, wisdom, honor, glory,

etc. None of these belong to man as he is.

Again, speaking of the appearing of Jesus Christ, the Word says: "In His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (1 Tim. 6:15, 16)

Christ has brought this immortality to light. The purpose and grace of God, says the Word, "is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10) What the gospel is, is shown in a few words by 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, ... for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Thus, then, in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is summed

up the gospel; and "through the gospel" it is said Christ "brought life and immortality to light." Certainly it was not by dying nor being buried that either life or immortality was brought to light, for both these things were familiar to all men; but to rise again from the dead, and bring with Him a multitude of the dead, who also appeared unto many (Matthew 27:52, 53), that was to bring to light something that had never been seen before; that was to bring life and immortality to light indeed. Therefore it is through the resurrection that Christ has brought immortality to light.

Again, the Scripture says that God will render eternal life "to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality." (Romans 2:6, 7) Now as immortality is to be sought for, and as God is the only one who has it, and as Christ is the only one who has brought it to light, it follows that immortality must be sought of God, through Christ. Even so says the Scripture: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His

Son. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11, 12)

Having then sought and found that immortality comes only through Christ, we ask, When is it bestowed upon us as our own? "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.... Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

Thus the story which the Word of God tells about immortality is this: Man, being mortal, has it not; God has it. Christ has brought it to light

through the Gospel; man is to seek for it of God, through Christ, and will obtain it at the resurrection of the dead; for then it is that this mortal puts on immortality; then it is that death is swallowed up in victory. This comes "at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible," and the living shall be changed. But when is it that the last trump sounds?—It is when the Lord Jesus comes in His glory. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

Immortality is obtained of God, though Christ, at the resurrection of the dead. It is the sound of the last trump that awakes the dead. That trump is sounded at the coming of the Lord. Therefore without the second coming of the Lord Jesus we shall never receive immortality. For this reason we long for His glorious appearing. We watch, we

wait for Him, who shall change our "vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," for "we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Chapter 2

Where Do Men Go When They Die?

Another important question concerning man, one, which has been asked by every person that ever lived long enough to think at all upon the subject, is, 'When a man dies, where does he go? What is his condition?' etc., etc. This question the Bible asks: "Man dies, and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?" (Job 14:10)

Of course, there have been many answers given to this question; and there are yet many, even in this land where Bibles are scattered everywhere. Some say that if he die wicked, he is in hell; if he die righteous, he is in heaven. Others say that he is in neither hell nor heaven, but in purgatory; and yet others, that he is in none of these, but has passed to the "spheres," and still associates and communicates with those who still live. Of course all these answers cannot be the right ones; and, as a

matter of fact, not one of them is the right one. The Bible alone is that which gives the right answer to this, its own question. And as it is alone the Bible answers to Bible questions that we are now studying, that alone shall be what we shall seek on this question of where is man when he has died.

"Man dies, and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?" Answer: "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." (Eccl. 9:3) To good King Josiah God said, "Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace." (2 Kings 22:20) Of the wicked He also says, "Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb." (Job 21:32) Jacob said, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." (Gen. 37:35) We shall not multiply texts on this point, but simply show that this is confirmed by the Word of Christ. When He comes to give reward to His people, and when He calls for them, they, all that are dead, are found in the grave: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth;

they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28,29) Therefore the Bible answer to this question is plainly that he is in the grave.

But what is his condition there? Let us read a verse from Job again: "Man gives up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up; so man lies down, and rises not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." (Job 14:10-120) This shows that man, when he dies, is asleep. Again, Job says that if he had died when he was an infant, "now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept; then had I been at rest, with kings and counselors of the earth.... There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master." (Job 3:13-19)

In the history of the kings of Israel and Judah,

twenty-five times is the record made of their deaths, "He slept with his fathers."

Not to multiply texts, we again turn to the Word of Christ. Lazarus was sick. Jesus and His disciples were some distance away, and Lazarus died. Jesus said: "Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said the disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death; but they thought that He had spoken of taking rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." (John 11:11-14) Here are the Words of Christ: "Lazarus sleeps;" "Lazarus is dead." Therefore the plain Word of Christ is that when a man is dead he is asleep.

Paul says that "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption." (Acts 13:36) And Peter says of him, "David is not ascended into the heavens." (Acts 2:34) And the reason is that "David slept with his fathers and was buried." (1 Kings 2:10)

Of Stephen it is recorded: "He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:60) It is certain, therefore, that the Bible plainly teaches that when man dies he falls asleep. The Word of God plainly teaches the sleep of the dead.

Death is wholly an unconscious sleep, as, in the very nature of the case, it must be when the place of sleep is in the grave. But here is the proof: "The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." "Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10) "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth;

in that very day his thoughts perish." (Ps. 146:3, 4) When men's love, and hatred, and envy, and their very thoughts, have perished, and their memory is gone, there can be nothing else but unconsciousness. And that is precisely what death is, and that is the condition into which men go when they die—a silent, dreamless sleep.

But the Bible story on this subject does not stop here. For "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. 15:20) "And many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection." (Matt. 27:52,53) And as God "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus," so also "them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him;" "for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with

them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:15-17) "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." (1Cor. 15:51)

Then it is that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Dan. 12:2). Then is the time to which David looked when he fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." (Ps. 17:15) This is the time to which Job looked when he said, "Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." (Job 14:12) For it is at the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead that the heavens roll away. "The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places," and men cried "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

(Rev. 6:14, 16, 17)

Therefore, the Bible answer to the Bible question, “When man gives up the ghost, where is he?” is this: He is asleep in the grave until the trump of God awakes the dead; until the voice of the glorious Son of God calls, and all that are in the graves hear His voice; for it is God who gives victory over death, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Reader, this is profitable teaching, for it is the teaching of the Word of God, for "thus says the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord thy God which teaches thee to profit, which leads thee by the way that thou shouldest go." (Isa. 48:17) This is the way that the Lord Jesus leads us. Will you follow?

Chapter 3

Do the Dead Praise the Lord?

Another question is, "Do the dead praise the Lord?" Nowadays it is held, as a matter of course, that if a person be righteous, or even professedly so, when he dies, he has gone to heaven, and has joined the angelic hosts in their holy songs of praise to the Creator of all. But in the Scriptures this question is asked, in connection with certain others, in a manner and in a tone which of themselves admit only of a negative answer.

Says the Psalmist: "Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise Thee? Shall Thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? Or Thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark? And Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" (Ps. 88:10-12). Here the grave, the place of the dead, is called "the land of forgetfulness." This is strictly in accord with that which we read under our last question, that "the dead know not anything, neither

have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten." They are in the land of "forgetfulness." "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished" (Eccl. 9:5); and "in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4); and "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou go" (Eccl. 9:10). In this respect, therefore, no single expression could better describe the place of the dead than does this one, "The land of forgetfulness." The Psalmist also speaks of it as "the dark." On this Job says: "I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness" (Job 10:21, 22). Those that have been long dead David says, "dwell in darkness" (Ps. 143:3).

Now it is of those who dwell in this place, the place of the dead, that the question is asked, 'Do they praise the Lord?' And here is the direct answer: "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (Ps. 115:17). And again:

"In death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" (Ps. 6:5). These words are the words of God. They are the truth. Therefore the idea that people go to heaven, or anywhere else but this place of the dead, when they die, cannot be the truth. The Lord, who speaks to us in the Bible, made man. He knows what is before us. He knows what will be after us. He knows our thoughts afar off. He it is who says, "The dead know not anything." He it is who says, "The dead praise not the Lord." He it is who says that the place of the dead is "the land of forgetfulness." We implicitly believe this word, for He alone knows. He teaches us to profit, and though we may have to pass through this land of darkness, this valley of the shadow of death, if our trust is in Him, His rod and His staff will comfort us, for He has gone this way before us. He died and lives again. If our hope is in Him, even though we may have to go to the place of the dead, yet we shall come again from it and live by Him.

King Hezekiah was one of the few good kings that Judah had. He fell "sick unto death." The Lord,

by the prophet, sent this message to him: "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live" (Isa. 38:1). Yet, although this word of the Lord says positively, "Thou shalt die, and not live," now it is believed by the great majority of people that when a man dies he does live, and that he lives more fully, more really, than ever before. It is now held that when a person dies he knows vastly more than he ever knew before, or than he ever could have known if he had not died; but from what we have set forth in these articles, there can be nothing more certain than that such is not the teaching of the Bible.

In this theory of the consciousness of the dead is the promise and potency, the whole sum and substance, of Spiritualism, purgatory, prayers for the dead, worship and invocation of saints, etc. But bring Spiritualism, with all these other things, to the test of these scriptures, and where will it appear? It will appear just where it rightly belongs, that is, in the train of "that old serpent which is the devil and Satan," who said to innocent Eve, "Thou shalt not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). People now think it

very strange that Eve should have believed the word of Satan. Yet with the example of Eve before them, and its fearful fruits of these thousands of years, and the word of God with its line upon line and precept upon precept—with all this before them, multitudes of these same people, instead of believing the word of God, will yet believe the same story that Satan told Eve.

When the prophet went to King Hezekiah with the message that he should die and not live, Hezekiah was greatly grieved, and turned his face to the wall and prayed, and said, "I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living." This, with much more, he said in his prayer, and the Lord sent Isaiah again to the king, saying, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years." Then Hezekiah praised the Lord and said: "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; . . . for the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit

cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy Truth" (See Isaiah 38, throughout).

Take this plain, express statement of the Word of God, "They that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth," and by it test the New Theology—probation after death—which is just now being discussed throughout the land and its utter worthlessness will be seen at a glance. When a man dies, his opportunity to learn the truth is gone. He is dead. He is gone to the "land of forgetfulness," to the grave, and they that go there cannot hope for the truth of God. If they have not learned it, and loved it, before they go there, they will never learn it at all. "Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). "To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4:7). The living, it is, not the dead, who praise the Lord.

Therefore, the Bible answer to this Bible question is, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither

any that go down into silence" (Ps. 115:17).

Chapter 4

If a Man Dies, Shall He Live Again?

This question is not one that is asked now so much as it ought to be. The question that is now asked a good deal more than it ought to be is whether man really dies—whether there is really any such thing as death. And as it is, in the great majority of cases, decided that man does not die, that "there is no death, what seems so is transition," in the view that man never ceases to live, it would not be an appropriate question at all to ask, Shall he live again?

But, as we have abundantly shown, the Bible considers this subject from the standpoint of the fact that man does die; that when he is dead he is wholly unconscious and that all prospect of future existence depends upon an affirmative answer, from the Word of God, to the question as to whether he shall live again. In Job 14:14 is written

the question to which we have here referred, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" And in Isaiah 26:19 we have the direct answer to the question: "Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

The only hope of future life, which the Word of God presents, is in the resurrection of the dead. This is the hope of the righteous; it is the Christian's hope. Paul, in discussing this subject of the resurrection of the dead, proves first that Christ is risen, and then says: "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty" (1 Cor. 15:12-14). It is evident that there were some at Corinth, even as there are some now, who professed to believe in Christ, and at the same time believed not in the resurrection of the dead. But Paul settles that at once by saying, "If

there be no resurrection of the dead," your faith in Christ is vain. This proves plainly that our hope and faith in Christ meet their fruition only at and by the resurrection of the dead.

This is so important that the Spirit of God, by the apostle, repeats it. Again he says: "For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!" (1 Cor. 15:16, 17). Here it is declared that to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny the resurrection of Christ, is to leave the professed believer yet in his sins; and therefore it subverts the gospel and the salvation of Christ. This is followed by another most important conclusion, and that is, If the dead rise not, "those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." It would be impossible to more forcibly show that all hope of future life depends upon the resurrection of the dead. If there be no resurrection of the dead, then the dead are perished. And this is stated, not of the wicked dead, but of the righteous dead, "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ," even these have perished if there be no resurrection of the dead. In verse 32,

this is repeated in another form: "If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"'"

Such argument as that is very seldom heard in these our days. The argument now is, 'What advantage it us to practice the life of Christian self-denial if the soul be not immortal? What advantage it us to do these things if we do not go to heaven when we die?' And so it is sung, —

"Oh, you must be a lover of the Lord, or you can't go to heaven when you die!"

The truth is that, though you be a lover of the Lord, you can't go to heaven when you die, but you can go at the resurrection of the dead; and that is at the coming of the Lord. For so it is written: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:22, 23). "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). In this manner it is that we go to heaven. In this manner we meet the Lord.

The hope of life by Christ, at the resurrection of the dead, is the hope in which Paul lived, the hope in which he exercised himself, the hope that he preached. When he stood before the council, he said: "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!" (Acts 23:6). And afterward, when he answered his accusers before Felix, he said: "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust... . let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day'"

(Acts 24:15-21). Again, when he stood before Agrippa, he said: "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?" (Acts 26:6-8).

Now put these things together: (a) He stood and was judged for the hope of the promise made of God. (b) This was the promise made unto the fathers. (c) Unto this promise the twelve tribes—all Israel—hope to come. (d) For this hope he was accused of the Jews. (e) But he was accused—called in question—of the Jews, "touching the resurrection of the dead." (f) Therefore the hope of the promise of God, made unto the fathers, is the hope of the promise of the resurrection of the dead. (g) This is made emphatic by his question to Agrippa, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" When Paul was at Athens, "because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts

17:18).

Therefore it is plainly proved that the hope, which God has set before us in Christ and His blessed gospel, is the hope of the resurrection from the dead unto everlasting life and eternal glory. And as this resurrection all depends upon the glorious appearing of our Savior, therefore the second coming of our Savior is inseparably connected with this, the Christian's "blessed hope." Thus says the Lord: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

This is that for which Job looked. He says: "All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes" (Job 14:14). This change is at the resurrection, for says Paul, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (1 Cor.

15:51, 52). Again says Job: "If I wait for the grave as my house, if I make my bed in the darkness, where then is my hope?" (Job 17:13-15). Here it is: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27).

Time and space would fail us to quote the words of this hope, expressed by David, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Hosea, and Micah, and all the prophets and apostles. We can only cite again the words that this is the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise we instantly serving God day and night hope to come. Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? The righteous dead shall live again, at the coming of the Lord, and therefore we look and anxiously wait for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus. Like faithful Job, our reins within us are consumed with earnest desire

for that glorious day. And as He assures us, "Surely I come quickly," our hearts reply, "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus."