

*Dying Legacy*

TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS BELOVED CHARGE.

BY NICHOLAS MURRAY, D. D.

February Fourth, 1861.

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By

NICHOLAS MURRAY, D.D.

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THINGS UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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WHY send forth these sermons? The subjects are not new; they have been treated by every faithful minister of Christ, and their treasures again and again unfolded in the Church. Why, then, send them forth? There is a secret reason: they are the *dying legacy* of a faithful pastor to his beloved flock. In that solemn hour when, like one translated, he was just entering the celestial city, his thoughts rested for a brief moment on those he had so long and so often endeavored to lead into "green pastures and beside the still waters;" and while he poured out his soul in prayer to God for them, he was reminded that he had prepared messages for them which he had not yet delivered, and he committed the delivery to other hands, as *his dying legacy to his people*.

*The Future World.* Here we find a con-

firmation of the faith of all ages, the testimony of Scripture and the deductions of reason, with an earnest appeal to his beloved flock to "live, not for the things which are seen and temporal, but for those which are unseen and eternal."

*A Personal God.* Here our faith is strengthened in things unseen and eternal by a review of great first principles, and our safeguard and the safeguard of the world established by the belief of the being and presence of God. The methods by which this personal God is made known to his people, and the peace and blessedness of walking with him, are set forth.

*The Soul.* In this third sermon we have another of the "unseen things," with its properties, the teachings of Scripture on its immortality, the responsibility of the trust, and the value of its salvation.

*Intermediate State,* or "the state of the soul between death and the resurrection."

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Here we find the destination of the soul settled, the Christian comforted in the anticipation of death, and the sinner alarmed. This was the last sermon written by this beloved pastor. His series was not completed. As we take up the prepared sheets for the fifth and last of the course, we find the Scripture, "How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come?" (1 Cor., xv., 35.) This was to close the course. The subject is still among the things unseen and eternal.

*Resurrection.* God, in his inscrutable providence, has left this subject open to pastor and people, that each in his own person may learn what it is to rise to glory and honor, or to everlasting shame and contempt.

"My work is done; I want my mind unclouded." . . . . "My work is done; I want to pray," is the utterance of the dying pastor. Confessing his unworthiness, and expressing his assurance that he had been washed in the blood of Christ and sanctified by his Spirit, he thanked God that he had prepared him for



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this trying hour. Committing his family, his domestics, his beloved Church and people, his dear elders, his trustees and deacons, and all classes of the community to the divine care, he prayed that they might be men after God's own heart. Especially he prayed for his young men, merchants and mechanics, that they might be God-fearing men, *hating covetousness*, and that the words he had spoken to them might bear fruit to the glory of God. His brethren in the ministry, his country and the world, were remembered. We may not enter too minutely into this sacred scene. Loving ties were sundering, and the full heart gave vent to its warm affections in earnest, tender, and ever-to-be-remembered expressions; but, having gathered together in one comprehensive petition all that was dear and all that had so long filled his great heart, like a departing apostle he lifted his hands: "Receive the blessing. 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.'" Having repeated the Lord's Prayer, he added, "'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.'" "No more—no more."



## THINGS UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

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### A FUTURE WORLD.

“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”  
—2 Cor., iv., 18.

WE never stop for an hour to consider the character of Paul the Apostle without having our minds elevated and our reverence greatly excited. In his state of nature he was a true man—true to the principles of his education and to his conscientious convictions. And, ignorantly believing that he was doing God’s service, he persecuted the disciples unto strange cities. But, when convicted of his error, he gave at once his wrong principles and prejudices, as chaff, to the winds of heaven, and grasped *the truth* with the promptitude and the earnestness of

a mind that saw at a glance its eternal importance. For three days he was "cast down," but not "forsaken;" during those days the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shined into his soul. His spiritual life, like that of plant and flower, germinated in darkness; and when taught by Ananias the way of salvation through Christ, he promptly embraced it. He bows at once to the truth. The heart of stone relents—the fury of persecution subsides—the murdering sword is thrown away—Saul the persecutor becomes Paul the Apostle; and, with an ardor proportioned to his former enmity, he preaches Christ as the wisdom of God, and as the power of God to every one that believes. He saw, at a glance, the losses, the persecutions, the excommunications, the dangers to which his new course of life subjected him; but he counted *every* thing the world promised as dross and as dung that he might win Christ. We find him, at the time he wrote our text, in great affliction. He felt that his life was in danger daily—that it was wearing out under his incessant labors and trials; but yet, in the exercise of unwavering faith in the Gospel, which brought life and immortali-

ty to light, he persevered in the discharge of every duty, and counted not his life dear if he could only win Christ! And why this course of moral heroism, *then*, and often *now*, called madness? The answer we have in our text. He looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The apostle here contrasts the things *seen* with the things *not* seen, and gives to the latter the preference. And not a *preference* merely; but, as the things seen are temporal—existing but for a day, like a tent pitched in the wilderness—they are not to be named in comparison with the things which are unseen, because they are eternal! The things which are *not seen* are of infinitely greater importance than the things which *are seen*. This, although reversing the usual estimate of men, is true as to *every* thing. You see the stream, but you see not the hidden springs from which it flows; the hidden springs are of more importance than the *seen* stream. You see the tree in verdure, flower, and fruit, but you see not the hidden agencies producing these results. You see around you the

most wonderful results of human skill, but you *see* not, nor can you *comprehend*, the mind that produces them! You daily observe the rotation of the world on its axis, and the wonderful regularity of its motion, but what do you know of the hidden laws that produce them? You see the members of your body, you can understand their various movements, but you see not the soul, which is to these movements as are the hidden springs and wheels of a clock to the hands that move on its face.

And it is in religion just as it is in other things; the things *unseen* are of infinitely greater importance than the things *seen*, and are equally *real*. We believe in the *unseen* in nature, why reject them in religion? We believe the *unseen* things in nature to be more important than the things *seen*, why not so believe in religious things? We are fully persuaded that the reason why men live so regardless of the future is that their faith is so feeble as to the things which are unseen and eternal. Their hearts are filled with the love of the world; their minds are engrossed with the things of time and sense. The god of this world has blinded their minds, "lest

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the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Believing all this, we purpose, in a brief series of discourses, and in a simple and practical form, to ask your attention to the consideration of SOME OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

And we commence to-day with

A FUTURE WORLD.

The question we now propose to discuss is a very simple one. It is not whether there are more worlds than one? This question, we think, philosophers have satisfactorily determined in the affirmative. Nor is it whether these other worlds are inhabited by beings like ourselves. This may or may not be the case. But, however that question may be settled, it disturbs not a question of revelation, nor does it modify our duty to God or to man. The question before us is this: Is there a future world, in which we are to live forever, and in which we are to be rewarded or punished according to the deeds done in the body? This is a question of the highest importance to us; it is a question so intensely practical as to induce us to summon every energy of mind and conscience in order to its

true settlement. We answer the question in the affirmative, and now ask your attention to our reasons for so believing.

1. *That there is a future world in which we are to live has been the faith of all the ages.* The earliest records of the race testify to such a belief. The Egyptians, Persians, Scythians, Assyrians, Celts, and Druids believed in the immortality of the soul, and, of course, in a future state. This faith was not lost in the deepest darkness into which the race ever sunk, nor was it surrendered as a traditionary prejudice amid the lights of the highest civilization. Socrates taught that, when the dead arrive at the place of departed spirits, they are judged. The good are sent to a place of vast enjoyments; the very bad to Tartarus; and those who are neither very good nor very bad are sent to a place of purification, where they are fitted for the enjoyment of the good. Socrates is the great authority for Purgatory, and not Christ, Paul, or Peter.

And this universal faith in a future world seems a part of our humanity. The mind of the child grasps it the moment it is presented. The mind of hoary age clings to it with

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a tenacity which no feebleness can relax. The savage, the sage, the hermit, the lover of fashion, the poor, the rich, equally cling to the belief of a future state, and are cheered by its hopes or awed by its fears. And when all other hopes and fears are forgotten amid the shadows of death, when collecting fast and thick around us, even then are we sustained by the hopes or depressed by the fears of meeting our God in judgment. And this indelible impression upon the universal conscience of man is itself a proof of the existence of a future world. Would our benevolent Creator implant such a belief in the universal conscience if there was nothing in the unseen to correspond to it? Would these voices, admonishing us of a future world, be evermore sounding in our ears, if there were no future world? Impossible.

Nor is it any objection to this argument that now and then men have arisen who have denied the immortality of the soul and a future state. These have been to the believers in them as are the comets which now and then blaze and burn out in the heavens, to the stars which are ever shining in their place. It is very strange that any man should wish



his soul to be mortal; but "a wicked man," says a Grecian philosopher, "is afraid of his judge, and therefore wishes that his soul and his body should perish together." So that we do not cease to be when we die. We merely pass from this world to a future world.

2. *The desire of future existence is innate to man.* There is no person who finds full satisfaction in his present enjoyment; and the more the mind is cultivated, the more it is seeking to advance from its present to some higher attainment. Things that give exquisite enjoyment at first soon lose their relish, and soon pall the appetite they pleased. And the evidence of all this you see in the universal desire for novelty—for change—you see every where around you.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never *is*, but always to be bless'd;  
The soul, uneasy and confined from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come."

And this desire of future existence is a powerful stimulus to noble and generous actions. When life was offered to Demosthenes on a base condition, he replied, "God forbid that I, who have heard Plato discourse so divinely on the immortality of the soul, should prefer

a life of disgrace to an honorable death." Hence, too, the noble actions of Christian heroes under the influence of things unseen and eternal. Their faith was the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and, in order to secure a title to "the better country," they counted not their own life dear. They looked beyond the bounds of the present; they lived for the future, and rejoiced in the hope that was set before them. And such, in some degree, is the universal desire of man. And would God excite this universal desire if there were no future world—if the soul died with the body?

Let us put this idea in a form that all can understand it. A man, filled with the love of adventure, ascended the Alps, with his dog as his only companion. He lost his way, was overtaken in a storm, and perished. He was soon discovered, his faithful dog lying dead by his side. And was there no future for that master more than for his dog? And, with these quenchless desires after immortality—with these thoughts within us which can roam through space and creation with more than the rapidity of light, is there no future world for us more than for the beasts that perish?

So that we do not cease to be when we die; we merely pass from this world to a future world.

3. *The admitted difficulties of Providence is another evidence to the same point.* It is admitted, to a certain extent, "that virtue is its own reward, and that vice is its own punishment." Were there no unseen world, the deeds of a Howard would bring their own reward, and the wickedness of a Herod would secure its own punishment. The natural tendency of virtue is to produce happiness, and of vice, misery; and by connecting happiness with virtue, and misery with vice, God has given us an illustration which every man feels as to the rectitude of his purposes to the children of men. Yet do these purposes seem very often frustrated in actual life. How often is virtue in rags, and vice wearing the royal purple! How often is virtue, like Lazarus, in abject poverty, and begging at the gate of vice, like the rich man clothed in purple and fine linen! How often is wickedness on the bench, like Jeffreys, and virtue at the bar, like Baxter! How often is hypocrisy installed as high-priest in the synagogue, like Caiaphas, and pronouncing the sentence of

excommunication upon immaculate virtue arraigned at its bar, like the adorable Redeemer! We wish not to exaggerate the difficulties in the world of Providence; but who does not daily see honesty thrown into the shade by a double-tongued expediency, or trodden under the iron heel of brazen effrontery? Who does not see honest industry sinking into the grave under the pressure and the burdens imposed by pampered idleness? Who does not see poltroon demagogues and partisans elevated to office, while the purest patriotism is left to die in neglect, weeping over the evils he would remedy? And why all this? Why does an omnipotent and benevolent God permit such things? Why are the wicked ever in power, and spreading themselves like green bay-trees? and why do the good ever wander in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, destitute, afflicted, tormented? God's plans are very large. The wheel of his providence makes a wide circuit. The life of man here is too short to allow the full development of his purposes. To do this requires *two* worlds. We see the heavens above us moving on in perfect order without a jarring note of discord.

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We see the physical laws of our earth producing their regular effects without ceasing; and there is no way of accounting for the disorders in the moral world but on the ground that there is a *future* world, where men will reap as they sow here! *There* the sun of Providence will pass from under eclipse, and the whole intelligent creation will clearly discern that God does make a difference between virtue and vice; between those who serve him and those who do not. These evidences render a future world probable—yes, even necessary to vindicate the works of God to man. But let us pass on,

4. *To the positive testimony of Scripture as to a future world.* If a navigator should discover an island in an unknown sea, his first desire would be to land upon it. If this were impossible, because of the rocks and of the billows every where lashing the shore, he would desire to know whether it was inhabited. Should a canoe be seen crossing the billows from the islands, and bringing its fruits for sale, the proof would be positive that it was inhabited, and the world would believe that it was. Now, have we any such evidence of a future world? Hear what we have to say in answer to this question.

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In the fullness of time Jesus Christ came into our world. But whence did he come? He came from the unseen world, to tell us about it, and to teach us definitely and authoritatively that it is the spirit-home of all the dead. He brought life and immortality to light; and, to prove the truth of his statements and the divinity of his mission, he wrought a series of the most stupendous miracles.

But has a *human* being ever returned to earth from the invisible world? Go to that mount of transfiguration, where the Savior assumed for a brief time the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; and who are these conversing with him? They were Moses and Elias; the one the venerable deliverer and legislator of Israel, the other the venerable priest and prophet of the dispensation which was just about to vanish away, who ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire, and, as if for the purpose of proving that, whether we die upon the mount with Moses, or are translated with the prophet, there is another world where we live after death.

And we have in the resurrection of Christ proof positive to the same point. If he was divine, he was also human. He assumed our

nature, suffered and died in our nature, and rose with *it*. The body that died rose from the grave; and he rose the first-fruits of those that slept, the pattern and the pledge of our resurrection; and he only went before to prepare a place for his people, for he will come again and receive them unto himself. He rose and ascended to a world now invisible to us.

Nor is this even all. If Moses and Elias came from the unseen world to ours, Paul went from ours to the unseen world. "I knew a man in Christ," he says, "about fourteen years ago, how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Here, then, we have the testimony of Paul that, while yet in the flesh, he had actually seen the world which is yet invisible to us! No wonder that he had so little regard for the things which are seen and temporal, and that he was mainly swayed by the things which are unseen and eternal.

And if from these *instances* in proof we pass to the teachings of the Scriptures, the evidence of a future state becomes at once overwhelming. The belief of a future lies at the foundation of the entire volume. If there is no such state, our religion has no meaning,

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and its teachings are all a delusion! Abraham lived in the expectation of a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God. Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible, for he had respect to the recompense of reward. All the patriarchs declared plainly that they sought a better country, that is, a heavenly. David says, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness. My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave." "For I know," says Job, "that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." And the belief in a future state forms the entire framework of the New Testament. "For we know," says Paul, "if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And Peter teaches us that believers are "begotten to the lively hope of an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them." And the Savior says, "I give unto them *eternal* life." "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the



kingdom of heaven." And the Scriptures teach with equal explicitness the future misery of the wicked, as they do the happiness of the righteous. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Here, then, we rest our proof as to a future state of being. Skepticism may affect to doubt, or may deny the testimony adduced, but it can not disprove it; and the man that denies it denies the testimony of Scripture, and the deductions of his own reason, and the longings of his own soul after immortality. Let us turn for a moment to some of the practical applications of this great doctrine.

While the doctrine of a future world has interpenetrated the faith of all nations and of all people, what is its practical effect upon the conduct of men? Which influences men most, the seen or the unseen world? All those out in the pursuit of sensual gratification, of power, wealth, fame, amusements, believe that they are to live forever! Perhaps, without an exception, you all believe the proofs we have now given of the future world, and yet how many of you will go out from these seats resolved to live for the things which are unseen and eternal? The fact is, that while there is a general credence in a future world,

there is far less *firm faith* in it than we imagine. How busy we are as to things this side of the grave—how careless as to things beyond it! See those parents, believing in a future world, and yet not to be comforted, because their children are gone there, or bringing up their children for this! See those *professing* the religion of Christ, and yet living for the present state as if it were never to end, and laying up treasures upon earth as if a future world were all a fable! See that man, verging to his threescore years and ten, with the unquestionable belief of a future world, and yet without one serious thought as to preparation to enter it! And there are many such here. There are multitudes who believe in a future world, and yet who regard the man who daily seeks preparation for it as more superstitious than reasonable, as more pious than wise. Seneca, after surveying the heavenly bodies, asked, “Is it to this little spot that the *great* designs and *vast* desires of men are confined? Is it for this that there is such disturbance of nations? Oh, folly of deceived men, to imagine *great* kingdoms in the compass of an *atom!*” And, in view of the unseen state, may we not ask, What is a man profited should he gain this entire globe, and fail of the hap-

piness of the future state? We are here but for a day, and *all* the things seen and temporal are but as the light dust of the balance when compared with the things which are unseen and eternal.

My dear hearers, are you now satisfied that we have proved the doctrine of a future world beyond any reasonable doubt? Do you not feel certain that, when you cease living here, you will, in another world, enter upon an eternal life? You can not tell when, where, or how you may pass the narrow frith which separates this from the future world, but cross it you must. And is it wise, amid *the seen*, to neglect the unseen? is it wise, amid things temporal, to forget the things that are unseen and eternal? Very many have kept on, and on, and on, to the very borders of this world, and put off a preparation for the next until they were just stepping into it. Then it was too late! Some such I have known and loved—and sought, in vain, to turn them from such a course of folly. And we warn you against such a course of folly. Live not for the world around you, but for the world before you; not for the things which are seen and temporal, but for the things which are unseen and eternal.

## THINGS UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

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### G O D.

“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.”  
— *Genesis*, i., 1.

ON the last Sabbath morning we commenced a series of discourses *on some of those things which are unseen and eternal*. Our object in doing so is, if possible, to arrest attention to their infinite importance. These things which are seen — these bodies, this earth, these heavens, with all their garniture, and all which they possess desirable — are temporal. They are but as a tent pitched in the wilderness, to be taken down by the traveler on his next remove ; but the things which are unseen are eternal. They are without variableness or shadow of turning. And our object in calling up these unseen things before you is to place them before you as *reali-*

*ties*, and to induce you to live, not for the things which are seen and temporal, but for the things which are unseen and eternal. And as in our last discourse we placed before you the doctrine of *a future world*, we will ask your attention this morning to the doctrine of

A PERSONAL GOD.

A missionary in India was asked by a pundit that he was instructing in the doctrines of the Bible to prove to him the being of a God. "I can not see him," he said, "and how can I know that he exists?" "Do you believe you have a *soul*?" "Oh yes," was the prompt reply. "Do you *see* your soul?" he again asked. "Certainly not," said the pundit. "And such," said the missionary, "is the living God; he is not seen by us, but he is every where present." And the Hindoo bowed assent to the truth that a thing may be *invisible* to us, and yet be a great power in the universe.

As we walk up and down in this world of ours, amid the things which are seen and temporal, we are every where met with order, and arrangement, and adaptation, and beauty. These we see in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath, and in the sea, and in the

body of man, fearfully and wonderfully made. And whence this order, adaptation, arrangement, and beauty? Our text answers the question: "In the beginning, *God* created the heaven and the earth." But who is *God*? And what if we are left to say with *Job*, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I can not perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I can not behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I can not see him." Does he not, therefore, exist? Have you no soul because you can not see it? Is there no wind that rolls the sea into billows because you can not see it? Is there no law that binds and regulates the planets, producing the regular succession of the seasons, because we do not see it? Do the thousand spindles of a mill go of themselves because you can not see the power that moves them? The *unseen* are the great powers of the world and of the universe, and none but a mind dark as was that of the pundit can question the being of a personal *God* because *unseen*. He is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; and if *seen*, he would be no longer *God*!

The existence of *God* is the basis of all

religion, because "*religion*" means a *system of truths* of which God is the subject and centre, or a *course of conduct* of which he is the grand object. To such a Being we and the universe sustain very important relations, if we can prove his existence. If there is no God, then the whole fabric of religion totters to its foundations, and the services it requires are not only vain, but unreasonable. But, happily for all the great interests involved, God has not left himself without ample witnesses on this subject. And while to undertake to prove the existence of God seems as unnecessary as to prove our own, yet is it well to strengthen our faith in things unseen and eternal by an occasional review of great first principles.

Permit a few brief thoughts, by way of preliminary, before giving a synopsis of the argument for the being of a personal God.

"The fool says in his heart there is no God." *This fool is the Atheist.* But atheism has never succeeded to any extent in weakening the general belief in his existence, and for two reasons: it is the theory of a corrupt heart, and it sets itself in opposition to an intuitive belief of the race. It is not the mind

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that refuses the evidence which proves his existence ; it is the heart which revolts against his holiness and against his law, which implies accountability, guilt, and punishment. It is our carnal nature which drives the intellect into rebellion, and then “the fool says in his heart there is no God.” But the absurdity of atheism is so obvious that we can afford to lay it aside with this brief notice. What would you think of the man who should gravely attempt to prove to you that your watch, or your coat, or your gloves, had *no* maker—that they made themselves! And what can you think of the man who would prove to you that these heavens above us, this earth on which we live, these bodies so wonderfully articulated, had no maker—that they made themselves! No man can be an Atheist until he knows *all* things ; for the thing which he does not know may be God ; and when he knows *all* things, he is God.

Nor has Pantheism ever succeeded to any extent in weakening the simple belief in the existence of a personal God save on its idolatrous side. This makes God the world, and the world God. Every thing that lives, and moves, and exists, is a development of God.



The tree, the stream, man and beast, the angel, the worm, Moses and Pharaoh, Paul and Judas, Balaam and his ass, are alike parts of God. The results to which this theory leads—the worship of man, beast, fowl, of the bad and the good, as God—stamps it as false up to the point of absurdity. Nor has atheism, nor Pantheism, nor any other theory which the corrupt heart of man has devised to get rid of a personal God, ever collected enough of evidence around them to weaken the general belief in the God in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Thus putting atheism and Pantheism aside, we proceed to place before you the testimony which proves the existence of a personal God. We must compress into paragraphs what it would take chapters and volumes fully to develop.

1. *We have no knowledge of any existence without a cause.* Look around you, and minutely examine *every thing* that meets the eye; and do you find *any* thing on the wide field of your scrutiny that has not had a *cause*? Does not every effect *require* a cause? If the little pin in your sleeve had a maker, must not every thing else that exists have had a maker? It is simply absurd to assert that

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there is *any* existence without an adequate cause. And all mankind have confessed their belief in the inseparable connection of cause and effect. If, on entering a building, I should see a wheel turning, I would at once conclude that the wheel had a maker, and that it was turned by some power; and can I look out upon this moving earth, with all its wonderful adaptations, without coming to a similar conclusion?

2. *The mind can not conceive of existence without a cause.* You find a deserted hut in the woods; it was built by somebody. You find a well in the desert; it was dug by somebody. You find a pocket-knife on the summit of the Andes; it was dropped by somebody from the regions of civilization, or it was brought from those regions. If nothing existed, nothing can possibly exist. For every thing that exists there must be a cause; nor can the human mind conceive to the contrary, save as to the great, first, *necessary existence*, which explains every thing, and without which we are in a labyrinth of mysteries.

3. *The existence of things proves the being of God.* You know that you exist. You require no proof here. You know you

did not exist always ; you *began* to be a few years since. *You* did not make that body, so wonderfully adjusted and contrived ; you did not put into that body that mind, of such mysterious powers. This is beyond human power. Your existence had a cause, and that cause we call God. And the understanding necessary to contrive, and the power necessary to create a being composed of human body and soul, admits of no limits. He who can contrive and create such a being, can contrive and create any thing, and he *certainly* created all things.

4. *The state of things is proof to the same point.* We admit the existence of each other ; and, when asked for the evidence of this admission, we give that of our senses. We see a form ; we hear a voice ; we see each other's actions and movements. But these are not the man ; they are only the effects of which man is the cause. And thus we reason as to the existence of God. In the world *without* and *within* us, we perceive every variety of effects produced by some adequate cause. Thus the motions of the planetary system ; the diffusion of light ; the growth, decay, and reconstruction constantly going on

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in progress around us; the storm, the lightning, the volcano, the rain, the dew; the pulsations of the heart; the perceptions of the senses; the rapid and various actions of the mind, are all effects of a cause adequate to their ceaseless production. And that cause is God.

And how wonderful the adaptation every where observable in the world of nature around us! Every organized being is complete in itself, and yet each seems necessary to the good and beauty of the whole. The grass covers the earth with beauty, and is adapted to the support of animals. Fruit, grain, and animals are adapted to the support of man. The earth, the air, the ocean, the rain, the dew, the sunshine, are all adapted to the production of vegetable life, and to the comfort and preservation of man. And in all these things there is a skill and a power which can be ascribed only to God. Infinite power and skill are every moment conspicuous in every thing around us.

What the nature of man craves—what the reason of man proves and approves—what the effects which every where meet the eye declare, the Scriptures plainly teach that

there is a God, the Creator of all things, who in the beginning made the heavens and the earth, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. He is *self-existent*; without beginning of days or end of years. He is *almighty*. To the power which gave existence to all things in heaven, earth, and hell—which upholds all things—there can be no limit. He moves every atom; expands every leaf; guides every ray of light; breathes in every wind; heaves the ocean, and rolls round the globe. He thundereth marvelously with his voice; holdeth the winds in his fist; sendeth lightnings with rain; looketh on the earth and it trembleth; toucheth the hills and they smoke; melteth the mountains at his presence, and causeth the outgoing of the morning and of the evening to rejoice. And with almighty power and infinite wisdom he is conducting all things to their destined and desired ends. He is the God of creation, providence, and grace. He is the God and the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the God we worship. And, although no man hath *seen* God at any time—although now we *see* him not, yet, believing in him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glo-

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ry. "In the beginning he made the heavens and the earth;" he now rules in the armies of heaven and among the children of men; his providence is universal, extending to all creatures and all their actions. "You talk about your God," said a Roman emperor to a rabbi; "I do not see him; show him to me." "Raise your eyes," said the rabbi, "to the heavens; God is there." And the emperor looked up into the sky. At that moment the sun passed from under a cloud, and poured its rays upon the earth, and the emperor closed his eyes, unable to bear its dazzling lustre. "What!" said the rabbi, "would you see God, when you have not power to look one of his satellites in the face for a moment?"

As surely as there is a sun in heaven, as surely as there is a living man, as surely as no effect can exist without a cause, as surely as the Bible is a divine revelation, so surely is there a God, who is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Having thus placed before you the evidence of the being of a personal God, we ask your serious attention to a few of the lessons which it teaches.

1. *It teaches us how great a being is God.* He created the heavens and the earth—that is, he made them out of nothing. He said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” He said, “Let there be a firmament,” and there was a firmament. He is the first cause of every effect we see. The heavens declare his glory, and the earth his skill. On him all things depend for their continuance, and by him all things are conducted in order and harmony to their destined ends. He exists without cause and without change. He is almighty. While all the men that live could not draw a mountain from its base, God takes up the isles as a very little thing, and moves this world sixty-eight thousand miles in an hour; and not this world merely, but the whole system of which it is a part. The power, the wisdom that do all this, we call God; but the *name* gives us no adequate idea of him; he is infinitely beyond our comprehension. “Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” Oh, to have our minds

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and our hearts thoroughly imbued with right feelings as to the greatness of God! It is in this way we may become great ourselves.

2. *It teaches us that we are ever living under his inspection.* "Thou, God, seest me," is the feeling which we should ever entertain in every walk of life and amid all its duties. All that we do we are doing under the immediate inspection of God. It is in him we live, and move, and have our being. He knows our downsitting and our uprising, and understands our thoughts when to us they are yet afar off. And as we move up and down our world—as we are engaged in its trade, travel, duties, we should ever feel that God is on our right hand and on our left. Although unseen, we are surrounded with God, from whose omnipotence there is no escape. And this conscious presence of God is our great safeguard. If we withhold our hand from evil because of the presence of man, how much more because of the presence of God? It was this sense of his presence that induced Joseph to say, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

The belief in the being and presence of God is the safeguard of the world—is the founda-



tion of civil order—is the great tie upon the conscience of man. What is an oath worth if there is no God, or if the individual taking it denies or disregards his existence? Men are to be trusted just in the proportion they believe in God and fear him; and they are to be distrusted just in the proportion they deny or disregard his existence. Nor can we account for many things we hear and see—for the corruption, fraud, dishonesty, peculations, prevailing in high places and in low, but on the ground that practical atheism has corrupted the public mind, and is poisoning the fountains of public influence. How different a world would ours be if all men could say,

“Within thy circling power I stand,  
On every side I find thy hand;  
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,  
I am surrounded still with God.”

3. *It teaches us to acquaint ourselves with God, and to be at peace with him.* God is not *known* by abstract definitions, nor even by logical or theological proofs of his existence, such as we have now placed before you. He is known very much as a man knows his friend, by the hourly wants he supplies—by his sympathy in suffering—by the fears which

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he relieves—by the temptations which he enables us to surmount. We learn to know God as the infant child learns to know its mother, by realizing his constant presence, and kindness, and care. And as we pass on through life, and find in every changing situation, in every reverse, in every trouble, from the lightest sorrow to those which move the soul to its depths, that he is equally present, and that his gracious aid is equally adequate, our faith gradually grows almost into sight, until his existence, love, and care become a reality. It was thus with Paul when he could say, “I know in whom I have believed, and that he will keep that which I have committed unto him.” To him, faith in God was the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. He walked with God as a man walks with a friend.

And how elevating the thought of walking with God, and how comforting! Are you a pilgrim walking in ways often dark? He is your guide. Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will direct your steps. Are you in affliction and sorrow? He is with you amid the deep waters and the fires. Call upon him in the day of trouble, and he will

not permit the waters to overwhelm you, nor the fires to consume you. Are you tried and tempted? He is able to succor them that are tempted. Do you think yourself overlooked because of your obscure situation? The hairs of your head are numbered. Various and changeful may be the scenes of your life, but he makes all things work together for your good. Do you fear death? He will be with you through the valley and shadow of death. Are you to return to the dust, and to moulder in the grave? He watches over your dust; in his book all your members are written; your flesh shall rest in hope. And walking with God in white will be the substance and the essence of the joys of heaven, and the theme of its unending hallelujahs.

But how may we acquaint ourselves with God, and be at peace with him? We may learn much of God from the things which he has made—from the laws and instincts he has given to his creatures—from his providential government of the world; but all these only exhibit him in part. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." We only know God truly as he has revealed himself in the face of Jesus Christ.

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Whatever is visible in an object is called its *face*. Thus we speak of the face of the heavens, and of the earth, and of the sea; and in each of these the glory of God is to be seen. But it is only in the face of Jesus Christ—that is, in his person, his life, his preaching, his miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, atonement, ascension, intercession, that the whole Godhead is revealed. When speaking of God in relation to the Gospel, Paul uses the epithet “*blessed*” with singular propriety: “According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” The Gospel is the grand emanation from the fountain of blessedness. It is the grand overflow of the divine goodness. It is the infinitely holy and blessed God pouring forth his happiness upon sinners through Jesus Christ. The result is, that, as God is the great Supreme, he must in all things occupy the supreme place.

God, then, though *unseen*, is the great reality. He gives us life, and breath, and all things we possess. To him we must give an account of every thought, word, and deed. We can only truly know God by believing on his Son. “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him.”



# THINGS UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

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## THE SOUL.

“The first man Adam was made a living soul.”

“Ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.”—1 Cor., xv., 45.

IN two discourses on *things unseen and eternal*, we have already placed before you *a future world* and *the being of a God*. These are both unseen to us; but yet are they great realities, which should influence us far beyond the things which are seen and temporal. This world is but a dot in comparison with the world to come, and the approbation of man is but as the tinkling of a cymbal, or as the murmuring of a ripple on the shore of the sea, to the approbation of God. But there are other things *unseen* of infinitely greater importance than the things which are seen, and which are

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ever seeking to give direction to our conduct. And among these is *the soul of man*.

When we turn to the record of creation as given us by Moses, we find a very different style of narrative as to the forming of matter, of beasts, and of man. He simply spoke into being the heavens and the earth, the beasts of the earth, the fishes of the sea, and fowl of the air. But man was designed for *dominion*, and he must be made in the image and likeness of his Creator. "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." And in the sense in which Adam possessed, do we all possess a living soul. The body, with all its parts, is visible. We see it. We feel it. The soul is invisible; but it is not less a reality because we do not see it; no more than is God, because we do not see him; no more than is the wind, because we do not see it. And while to undertake to prove the existence of the soul seems as unnecessary as to prove the existence of the body, yet is it well to strengthen our faith in things unseen by an occasional review of great principles, until our faith shall be evidence of things not seen.

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And in the present discourse we invite your attention to

THE SOUL AND ITS PROPERTIES.

What is the soul ? This is a question that has been variously answered, and especially by those ignorant of the Scriptures or rejecting its instructions. Some have thought it to be a subtle air composed of atoms. Some have maintained that it was a flame, or a portion of heavenly light. Some make thinking the essence of the soul. Some have taught that men are endowed with three kinds of soul—the rational, the sensitive, and the vegetative ; and, were it not for the light and instructions of heaven upon this subject, man would become bewildered in the mazes of his speculations. Conscious of the working within him of that which no modification of matter could produce—that he was a combination of the spiritual and of the material, of the thinking and the thoughtless—he would seek after the nature of the spirit within him until lost in the profundity of his ignorance, or bewildered in the heights of his imaginings ; ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

From this endless dreaming as to the soul,



God has mercifully delivered us by the revelations of his Word, from which we learn that man was made in the image of God. God made matter, but not in his image, for God is immaterial; so that man being made in the image and likeness of God, must have reference to his spiritual nature—his soul—because it is un-compounded, indivisible, capable of thought and activity, and immortal. So that the soul is the vital, immaterial substance in man whereby he perceives, reasons, remembers, and wills; and it is rather to be described by its operations than to be defined by its essence. We are conscious that it differs from the body and matter. Our body, like that of other animals, is made of the dust. All material things are made of dust. But, to distinguish man from all other animals, he was made a living soul.

Such being the soul, we remark, as to its properties,

1. *That it is a simple substance.* The soul is *one* single agent, and not made up of several parts. In this respect it is like to God and to angels. In this respect it differs from all *material* substances. These are made up of parts, and dissolve on the separa-

tion of those parts. The soul, because a simple substance, can not be thus separated, and can not therefore perish. We often say that the mind reasons, that the heart feels, that the conscience approves or condemns, that the will decides, as if all these were different parts of the soul. But it is the one indivisible, rational, feeling, moral, self-determining soul that reasons, feels, approves, condemns, or decides. These are the acts of the one agent—the soul; just as walking, running, lying down, fighting, are acts of the same body. The soul is a simple substance.

2. *The soul is a thinking substance.* Thinking beings are the only beings that are active, that originate changes, that commence operations in reference to future results, that contrive, invent, and direct unconscious objects to their proper uses. Animals have instincts sometimes approaching reason, but they know not God, nor moral distinctions, and are not the subjects of moral government. What being in this lower world thinks but man? And that thought inheres in the soul—is of its very nature—is obvious. Atoms do not think. If they do not think separately, neither can they collectively. You may arrange them as you

may, yet they can not think. You may attenuate matter—you may subject it to chemical processes—you may form it into the most exquisite machinery, yet it will not think. That steamer, that walks over the ocean as a thing of life—that sewing-machine, that seems to rival the skill of human fingers—that machinery, which drives a thousand spindles with a regularity which astonishes—that watch, which moves with the regularity of the sun, do not think. The soul of that child, just rising into thoughtfulness, infinitely surpasses them all, because it thinks. It is only the immaterial soul that thinks.

3. *The soul possesses affections.* God is a being of infinite affections. He loves the good, he hates the evil. He is the subject of infinite joy in himself. And the soul of man is like him in these respects. In its state of holiness, before darkened and corrupted by sin, it loved the good, it hated the evil, it rejoiced in moral virtue; and its affections are yet the great springs from which proceed its actions. As the mind loves or hates, rejoices or sorrows, so it acts. Its affections direct its contemplations, and give direction to all our pursuits and associations. They form the bond of union

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between families, communities, and states. Without affections man would be as a stork, and the world would be a desert.

4. *The soul is immortal.* The body and soul of man were originally designed for immortality. After the fall, the body was sentenced to return to the dust from which it was made, but the soul was left possessed of the never-dying principle with which it was endowed. Save by the power which created it, it was incapable of dissolution. But, turning aside from arguments like these to prove the existence and immortality of the soul, let us address ourselves for a moment to your own consciousness.

You are *conscious* of the power of reflection. You review the past—you recall at will the acts and scenes of former days—you cause them to pass in review before you—you pass along the various links which form the chain of history until you reach the origin of man—you draw lessons from the great facts and incidents which meet you by the way for the guidance of your own course. No animal around you is capable of doing this. The leviathan of the deep, the monarch of the forest, the eagle—the king of birds—know not who

or what was before them. And what is it in you that enables you to do what these do not? Your soul.

You are conscious of *the power of invention*. All possess it in kind; some to a remarkable degree. The world is full of its effects. These effects you see in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, in all the mechanic arts. They are such as often to astonish. But what has any mere animal ever invented? What improvement has the beaver ever made on its original dam? or the bee in its comb? or the bird in its nest? And what is it that enables you to do what these do not? It is your soul.

You are conscious of an anxious desire of *forecasting the future*. And such is our solicitude upon this matter, and the absurd and wicked conduct to which it is liable to lead us, that we are repeatedly commanded to take no undue thought for to-morrow. How rapidly, in thought, we pass from the beginning to the end of things! How often we withhold our hand from an act, fearing its consequences! How often we rush to a future judgment, and decide upon things here in the light of the aspect they will assume there!

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When in present pain, how eagerly we anticipate future relief! How the joys that are placed before us make us to feel that present afflictions are but for a moment! And how our souls are cast down within us when clouds and darkness rest upon the future! No animal around you is capable of exercises like these. Sufficient is the good or evil of each returning day to them. And if the ant builds her store-house in the summer, and fills it with provisions for the winter, it builds it where the tread of a beast may crush it to atoms, or where the descending rains may sweep it away. And what is it in you that enables you to do what these do not? We again reply, it is your soul.

You are conscious of a desire for happiness which nothing earthly satisfies. Wealth promises happiness; but, when obtained, it only brings anxious care. Station promises happiness; but it subjects us to the jealousies of others, and withholds what it promised. Sensual gratification promises happiness; but the pleasures of sense are only those which we enjoy in common with the brute. Open to man all the fountains of earthly pleasure—permit him to drink freely of them all, and his

desires for happiness are all unquenched; yes, more, they are stronger than ever. And why is this? Oh! man has a living soul, that was made for God, and that nothing beneath God can fill; and, until God is its portion, its burning thirst for happiness will remain unsatisfied.

And this soul is *to live forever*. Some of the arguments to prove this we have just stated. As it is not material, consisting of parts, it is incapable of dissolution. Its powers are not, and can not be, the result of material organization. It perceives the present, recalls the past, and anticipates the future. It rises from earth to the study and contemplation of the phenomena of nature in the most distant fields of creation. By a process of reasoning, it traces causes to their effects, and effects to their causes; and, through the works of God, it goes up to the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity! It ascertains our relations to God and to man, and the various duties growing out of those relations. Is it conceivable that God would kindle up such a light within us to burn for a few years, and then quench it forever?

And the operations of conscience prove the

endless life of the soul. The mind judges of truth and error—the conscience of right and wrong. The conscience enjoins the right and forbids the wrong, and points to a coming judgment where we shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body. And why this internal monitor, to admonish of future existence, if there is no such existence?

What reason thus renders probable, the Scriptures place beyond all doubt, as Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. The Scriptures do not so much *prove* the immortality of the soul as they take it for granted, and give such information in reference to it as practically to influence the conduct of men. David says, "Into thy hand I commit my spirit;" and these were the words of the expiring Savior; and the last words of Stephen were, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." What do these, and all such phrases mean, unless the soul lives after its separation from the body? In describing death, Solomon says, "Then shall the dust return to the dust as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." And what does this mean, unless the soul lives after the death of the body? In the



parable of Dives and Lazarus, the Savior teaches us that Dives died and went to hell, and that Lazarus died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom; and to the thief on the cross the Savior said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Of course it was his soul that went to Paradise. The Savior says, as to his believing people, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand;" and again he says, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." And John, in Patmos, on seeing the multitude which no man can number, clothed in white, standing before the throne, asked, Who are these? And the angel answered, "These are they who have come out of many tribulations—who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Such, then, is the soul, and such are its properties, and such are the evidences which prove its immortality. And as the first man, Adam, was made a living soul, so are we all made. A soul more valuable than worlds, bearing upon it the impress of immortality, is

in the possession of us all; and we can each say, in the sweet words of Montgomery,

“Time grows not old with length of years—  
Changes he brings, but changes not:  
New-born each moment he appears—  
We run our race, and are forgot.”

“Stars in perennial rounds return,  
 As from eternity they came,  
 And to eternity might burn—  
We are not for one hour the same.”

“Spring flowers renew their wild perfume,  
 But ere a second spring they fly;  
 For life is longer than their bloom—  
 Our bloom is sweeter, yet we die.”

“Yet stars, like flowers, have but their day;  
 And Time, like stars, shall cease to roll;  
We have what never can decay—  
A living and immortal soul.”

With a few of the practical lessons which it teaches we will close this important subject.

1. *It teaches us how illustrious a being is man.* Before created by God, this world was fitted up for his residence. It was only when the earth was carpeted with beauty, and the sky spread over it its magnificent curtains, and the sun, moon, and stars were hung up to illumine it by day and by night, that man was ushered into it to be its tenant and its lord. And how fearfully and wonderfully is he made!

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He has a body, like the animals that were made for his service and use. This is seen and temporal. This must return to the dust as it was. But, unlike all animals, he has a soul, because immaterial, immortal! That soul is unseen and eternal. It will live as long as God lives. Well might Paul say, "Thou hast made him but a little lower than the angels; thou hast clothed him with glory and honor." And, were we disposed to worship any being or thing beneath God, there is nothing out of heaven before which we would sooner bow in homage than before regenerated man, and for the reason that he is in the possession of a living, renewed, immortal soul, destined for an eternal life in heaven. My dear hearers, do we ponder sufficiently our illustrious descent, or our eternal destiny? Our souls are to live *forever!*

2. *It teaches the great value of the soul above the body.* The body returns to the dust as it was, but the soul must return to the God that gave it. And, on the common principle that things of the greatest value receive the greatest care, how far beyond our care for the body should be our care for the soul! And yet, alas! to what a degree is the reverse

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of this true! The fond mother will cradle her infant in down—will care for her child with sleepless solicitude—will have it educated with all care, and by the best masters her means can afford—will fit it for the stage of life at any expense, and yet will overlook its immortal soul! Are there no such mothers? The father will rise with the sun of every day, and retire weary to rest at night, and for half a century of years, toiling to accumulate riches for himself and family, and yet never spend a day of serious thought as to the future of his own soul, or the souls of those for whom he is laying up earthly treasures! Are there no such fathers? Are there not many now under the sound of my voice who daily feed, dress, and garnish the body—who attend to its every want, pain, ache, with the utmost punctuality—who will spend any amount of money to repair its diseased functions, and who yet live in the utter neglect of their souls? Nor can we account for the alarming neglect of the soul, which is so visible on every hand, save on the ground of a latent and widespread infidelity as to its existence. And yet that careless, reckless, and, it may be, that profane and degraded man, would be loud in his

anathemas against our preaching if we taught that man has not a living soul—that he is as the brutes that perish. And yet there is no way of accounting for his conduct save on the ground that he believes that he is no higher than the brutes in the scale of being—that his motto is, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” My hearers, we ask you not to neglect the body, but we implore you not to forget the soul, which is to the body as the sun is to the glow-worm. We ask you not to disregard the things that are seen and temporal, but we implore you duly to regard the things which are unseen and eternal.

**3. *It teaches the value of the salvation of the soul.*** It is immortal, and has to spend its eternity in heaven or in hell. Hence the value of its salvation. Ought it not to be our first care? True, we are surrounded by daily cares, and duties, and crosses; but the soul should be our *first* care; “for what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul? or what would a man give in exchange for his soul?”

There is a buyer in the market of the world whose name is never in the newspapers, and whose bids are never in the “Prices Current.”

Yet is his business extensive and successful. He walks boldly on 'Change; he glides into the bank and counting-house; he steps into the workshop; he goes out upon the farm; the tavern, the theatre, the ball-room, are the places of his greatest success. He is every where to be found in the pursuit of his own business. But who is he? *He is the buyer of souls.* His object is to find out what price each one will *take* in exchange for his soul. He paid to Judas for his soul only thirty pieces of silver. He has bought some for less; but for wealth, station, name, fame—for the noisy breath of the fickle multitude, which changes from hosannas to execrations with the changing wind, how many are exchanging their souls! Yes, for the guilty, transient, unsatisfying pleasures of an hour, how many around us are bartering away their immortal souls!

It is narrated of a certain merchant, engaged in a very profitable business, that he was once deeply moved as to his salvation. A friend set before him the riches of earth and of heaven. Pausing for some moments, he said, "Give me my portion here." He went on, and accumulated a large fortune, and when he was dying he said to the same friend, "I have gained the world, but I have lost my soul."

## THINGS UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

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### INTERMEDIATE STATE.

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”—*Ecclesiastes*, xii., 7.

MAN is fearfully and wonderfully made. He was formed last of all the creatures of God, as the master-piece of the Creator. He is a compendium of the creation—a little world in miniature—uniting in himself something of the vegetable, the animal, and the rational. His main constituent and essential elements are two—the body, and the soul or spirit. The one was made out of the dust; it is material and visible. Never was there made such a perfect, beautiful piece of machinery, with each part so exactly adapted to every other. The other part, the soul or spirit, was breathed into it. It is spiritual and invisible. It is not an accident of matter, nor a quality

inherent in it. It lives *out* of the body, and, perhaps, better than *in* it. It is a spiritual substance, immaterial and immortal.

In the present life, this body and spirit are mysteriously united together. The body is to the soul as is the case to the clock—as is the instrument to the agent. What disposition God would have made of man had he never sinned we know not. As this planet could *not* contain all the successive generations of Adam, he would not continue him here. But *how*, or *where* would he remove him? This we may not know; but it would not be by death, for death is a penal evil. Nor would the body and spirit be separated as *now*—the body, without the soul, to return to the earth as it was, and the soul, without the body, to return to the God that gave it.

But sin has entered into the world, and death by sin; and all die, because all have sinned. And when the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is broken—that is, when death occurs—then the body returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. And this is the universal law as to our humanity.

Take any one of the multitude of cases that



are evermore taking place. There is a parent watching by the bed of a dying child. Slow, but certain, is the progress of disease. Life is driven from one fortress to another until it is made to surrender. And the change it makes is at once affecting and appalling. However familiar with it, death always induces solemnity and reflection. The body is taken to the grave, and the mourners go about the streets. This is all seen and temporal. But where does the soul go? This is the question which nature and religion alike suggest.

We have already, in our present series of discourses on *things unseen and eternal*, placed before you *a future world, the being of a God, and the immortality of the soul*. And our object in the present discourse is to discuss before you,

THE STATE OF THE SOUL BETWEEN DEATH  
AND THE RESURRECTION.

Whether this is a subject more theoretical than practical, we can better decide at the close of the discussion than now. It is a subject in which we all have the deepest interest, as we all have friends who have *passed* through the gates of death, and as we have each soon

to pass through them for ourselves. Where, then, does the soul go at death? This question opens up our whole subject, and has received different answers more or less remote from the truth. As we have already proved the immortality of the soul, we have nothing now to do save with those who believe in its *future* existence.

1. *Some tell us that at death the soul goes to an intermediate state, there to await the resurrection and the judgment.* This theory is founded on a criticism on the terms used to express the state of the soul after death. One of these terms is "*Hades*" (ᾗδης). This is the term used in these and other passages: "The gates of *hell* shall not prevail against it" (Matt., xvi., 18). "In *hell* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke, xvi., 23). "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*" (Acts, ii., 27). "O *grave*, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor., xv., 55). Another of these terms is "*Abraham's bosom*" (κόλπος Ἀβραάμ). "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke, xvi., 23). Another of these terms is "*heaven*" (οὐρανός), and the one most frequently used; as, "Our Father, who art in heaven"

(Matt., vi., 9). "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of *heaven*" (Matt., v., 3). "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in *heaven*" (v., 12). Another of these terms is *Paradise* (Παράδεισος). "This day," said Jesus to the dying malefactor—the penitent thief—"this day shalt thou be with me in *Paradise*" (Luke, xxiii., 43). Another of these terms is "*Tartarus*" (Τάρταρος). "For, if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell" (2 Pet., ii., 4). And another of these terms is "*Gehenna*." "But whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matt., v., 22). "For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt., v., 29). These, then, are the words and phrases used in the New Testament to represent the state into which the soul passes at death: they are Hades, Abraham's bosom, Heaven, Paradise, Tartarus, Gehenna. They are all applied to the *invisible state*, into which the soul enters at death. That *state* is represented as two provinces divided by a great gulf; that on the one side is called "Abraham's bosom,"

“Heaven,” “Paradise;” that on the other is called “Hades,” “Tartarus,” “Gehenna.” In these provinces the souls of the good and of the bad are retained until the resurrection and the final judgment; then the good enter Heaven, and the bad Hell, properly so called. This is, in brief, the doctrine of an *intermediate* state, as held by many Protestants and divines.

But, while this theory admits the immortality of the soul, conscious existence after death, and experience of happiness and misery—while it falls in with the general belief that rewards and punishments will not be consummated until after the resurrection and the judgment, yet must we reject it as a theory which has nothing to sustain it but a doubtful criticism, which only scholars can fully understand, and the wresting of a few words from their figurative to a literal meaning. This doctrine of an intermediate state rests upon a vapor, is utterly unsatisfactory to the thoughtful mind, and is opposed, as we shall soon show, to some of the plainest teachings of the Scriptures. We therefore dismiss it as unworthy of credence.

2. *Another theory as to the state of the soul*

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*between death and the resurrection is that it lies in an unconscious state.* But this is in opposition to all our notions as to spirit, which is a living, thinking, active subsistence, capable of life and activity without a body as with a body. God has neither body nor parts, and he is ever active. So is it as to angels. And the separation of the soul from the body would seem rather to quicken its energies than to reduce it to insensibility. Is it not a fact that, the more active the mind, the less we think of the body? As pent-up fires burn the brighter when relieved from the earth or ashes under which they smoulder, so the soul, when it leaves its clay tabernacle, is the more free to exert its natural energies.

But the advocates of this theory oppose all these reasonings with scriptures, which seem to intimate that the soul at death falls into a state of unconsciousness. Thus David says, "Return unto *thy rest*, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee" (Ps. cxvi., 7). Again he says, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (Ps. cxv., 17). And again he says, "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. lxxxviii., 11, 12). And so, also, death is represented as *a sleep*. Thus Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may wake him out of his sleep." It is said of Stephen, when he died, that "he fell asleep." And, speaking of the resurrection, Paul says (1 Thess., iv., 14), "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with him." It is upon these and similar texts that such men as Whately base the theory of an unconscious state of the soul between death and the resurrection.

Now to us it is very obvious that these and all similar passages are figurative and metaphorical, and must be so explained. All that David meant is that the dead can not any longer praise God in this world—that the wonders of his providence can not be known by the sleepers in the tomb—that only the living can take any part in advancing the glory of God here. And the dead are said to be asleep, because of the remarkable resemblance between death and sleep. This theory also we dismiss as unworthy of credence.

3. There is yet another theory as to the state of departed souls. It is that of the Church of Rome, which is not worthy of serious argument to disprove it. It teaches that, as none die perfectly holy, all must pass through the fires of Purgatory in order to be prepared for heaven. This is not a doctrine of the Bible. It is borrowed from the sixth book of Virgil's *Æneid*, where an account is given of the processes through which souls must go in order to be prepared for the Elysian Fields. As we are dealing with Christian, and not heathen theories, we can afford to lay this aside as unworthy of farther notice. To talk of a *soul* being *purified* by fire is at once to render it material and destructible. Purgatory is not only untrue as a theory, but it is a physical impossibility.

To the question, Where does the soul go at death? we answer,

4. *It returns to the God who gave it.* At death, the body becomes cold and corruptible; it is soon conveyed to the grave, where it returns to the dust as it was. The soul goes immediately to the presence of its God. If *prepared* for blessedness, it will enter upon its destined happiness without pause, suspen-

sion, or intermediate preparation. If not prepared, without any respite or reprieve it will enter upon its destined misery. No dreamy slumber, no drowsy torpor, will seal up the faculties of the soul; it knows no state of hibernation until spring shall revisit the grave in which the body lies mourning; it goes immediately to God, to receive from him, as judge, according to the deeds done in the body. And of all this we think we have abundant scriptural proof.

Take your stand by the bier of Lazarus, who, although a child of God, seems deserted of heaven and of earth. He dies, and his soul is carried "by angels into Abraham's bosom," which is but a figurative name for heaven. Dives, at whose gate he was laid, in vain, for alms, also died, and was buried; and the next we read of him is "that in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." We admit that the Gospel narrative as to these is a parable; we also admit that we can not give to its figurative language a literal interpretation; but then its great central truth is that Lazarus went immediately to a state of ineffable bliss, and Dives to a state of unspeakable misery. And this is the doctrine we believe.



Take your stand, again, before those three crosses, on the centre one of which hung the expiring Son of God. One of the thieves repented, repented, and, lifting up his voice amid the agitations and the convulsions of nature, cried to the Savior, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." It was a cry for mercy amid those agonies which were loosing the silver cord and breaking the golden bowl. And what was the reply of the Savior? "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"—which is, again, but a figurative name for heaven. What mean these words, spoken under such solemn circumstances? That they would go into some intermediate state called Paradise? No. That they would go together into some dreamy elysium, some comatose state—he to awake after three days, on the resurrection of his body, and the penitent man to remain in that state till the resurrection of his body? Believe this who can. Christ just meant what he said: To-day—this very day shalt thou be with me in heaven, to share with me its joys and its repose. And thus the souls of all dying in the faith go to be with Jesus in Paradise. This is the doctrine we believe.

While these passages are sufficient to prove the doctrine that the soul at death returns to the God that gave it—that the souls of believers, at death, do immediately pass into glory, there are many other passages bearing on the same doctrine to which we will briefly advert. The prayer of Stephen was, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Is it not plain that he felt and believed that his soul would immediately pass into the presence of his Savior? Paul says (2 Cor., v., 1), “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Now what does this mean unless at death we pass from the earthly to the heavenly house? And what does he mean when he says (Phil., i., 23), “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better?” Did he not obviously believe that at death he would immediately pass into the presence of Christ? And what does he mean when he says (2 Cor., v., 6, 8), “We are confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord: we are confident, I say, and are willing rather to be

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absent from the body and to be present with the Lord?" Is it possible for language to express in a clearer manner the immediate transition of the soul from the body into the presence of Christ? What *detains* it from his presence is its *continuance* in the body; what introduces it into his presence is its departure from the body; and without any interval, as our admirable Catechism says, "the souls of believers, at their death, are made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." So that the doctrine of an intermediate state is a fiction, as is also the doctrine of Purgatory, and the repose of the soul in unconsciousness until the morning of the resurrection.

Yet is it true that when the body and soul, at the resurrection, shall be reunited, their capacity for joy or suffering will be greatly increased. Nor will the *bliss* of heaven be full and perfect until it is enjoyed by soul and body united, nor will the punishment of everlasting banishment from God be felt to the full until it falls upon those who only rise from the grave to shame and everlasting contempt.

Such being what we consider the true

teachings of the Scriptures and of the Church as to the state of the soul between death and the resurrection, it only remains for us to place before you a few of the many important lessons which it teaches.

1. *It settles the destination of the soul at death.* And this can not be a matter of curious speculation to any of us. On the contrary, how often has it been to us all a subject of the most anxious inquiry! When the heart has beat its last pulsation, and we have closed the eyes of a dear friend in death, how often has the question arisen, Oh that I knew where his soul has gone! And, as we have returned from the grave where we have laid the body to sleep, how deeply the question often presses upon the heart, Where is the soul now? The body, in its winding-sheet, sleeps in the grave, but is the soul asleep also? Whether our dead remember *us* as we remember *them*, we know not; whether they see us, and watch over us, and minister to us, we may not know; but we do know that they live—that they live *with* God or *away* from God, according to the character they bore with them into eternity. Away, then, with the dreary, skeptical philosophy which would wrap up the soul in the same

winding-sheet with the body, and which would consign it to sleep with the body until the resurrection! It is equally at war with the teachings of the Scriptures, and with the natural longings of every human soul. At death, the soul, without a moment's stay, returns to the God that gave it.

Death, we reason, instead of weakening, vastly increases the perceptive powers of the soul. It is freed from this body of sin and death which encumbers it as does a weight the eagle that seeks to soar to the sun. As death closes the eyes of the body, it opens those of the soul; so that one hour after death discovers the errors of many ages. We are here like men clambering up a mountain in a dense fog; when they reach the summit the fog suddenly passes away, and the entire landscape lies sun-gilt before them. So, when the soul at death returns to God, we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

2. *It comforts the Christian in the anticipation of death.* Death is the leviathan which all fear. It is not in human nature to regard it other than an enemy. We stand over the bed of a dying friend. The quivering lip—the contracted brow—the laboring breath,

prove that physical pain accompanies death. But what the struggling soul then feels we can only guess. They have been long united, and the separation of those long united gives pain. Sometimes the pain of dying is beyond description, and hence death is so universally regarded as an enemy. But this can be all calmly and joyfully borne when we know that the soul, when released from the body, goes directly to God who gave it. Hear the Savior say to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Hear Stephen say, "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit." See the soul of Lazarus, the moment it quit its dilapidated tenement, conveyed by angels to Abraham's bosom. And thus it shall be with all the saints. To the person prepared for the event, like Lazarus, death comes only to lift up the veil of the flesh from the soul, and to introduce it at once to the glories and the happiness of heaven. I have stood at the death-bed of many a dying saint, and it seemed to me that, had I but *another sense*, I could see the soul taking its departure from the body, like a bird of Paradise freed from its confinement, and going directly to heaven to the God who gave it. And why is it that,

as believers, we can not more fully realize all this, and feel less fear of death, which is but the short passage-way to glory? Alas! we are influenced more by the things which are seen and temporal than by those which are unseen and eternal.

3. *It should alarm the sinner in the anticipation of death.* If Lazarus went to heaven at death, so Dives went to hell. The passage to the one place was just as short and as certain as to the other. There is no intermediate state—no Purgatory—no chamber of sleep till the resurrection—no annihilation for the wicked! Their souls, at death, go directly to God as judge. Unclothed, in their nakedness, they shall stand before him to be examined, scanned, pierced through, and through, and through by his all-searching eye. And then they will be consigned to everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels! And how important to be prepared for the event which must happen to *all*, and which at any hour may happen to any of us!

What a change the first hour in the spirit-world will make in the opinions of men! Here all things are mixed up together, so that it is difficult often to discern between the righteous

and the wicked. They seem equally to hope ; but the hopes of the righteous are confirmed, and the hopes of the wicked are confounded ! When death comes, "then shall the dust return to the dust as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."



# THINGS UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

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## RESURRECTION.

“How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?”

“*Πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται;*”—1 Cor. xv., 35.

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