



FIVE MINUTES AFTER DEATH

The Biblical life span is threescore and ten years. But this is a very brief span for man. Only 9.2 per cent of Americans are over sixty-five years of age. Some say that man should live to be 150 years old, Dr. Alexander Bogomoletz, Russian scientist, agreed to this, and prepared a serum designed to retard the aging of the body's connective tissues. It is known scientifically as "ACS," or "anti-reticular cytotoxic serum." The doctor died at the age of sixty-four, His heart did not permit him to take his own medicine,

Whether a man lives to be 70 or 170 he is short of what God designed. Forever! - that was Heaven's plan for man.

Yet because of sin "it is appointed unto men once to die." Hebrews 9:27. Most men will die twice; Christians, but once, Questioned the psalmist, "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?" Psalm 89:48. Said Job, "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living," Job 30:23, The death rate in the United States is more than a million a year; in China, a million a month, it is said.

The "man with the sickle" gets around to all of us, because "there is no man" who has "power in the day of death," Ecclesiastes 8:8.

"Ten thousand human beings set forth together on their journey. After ten years one third at least have disappeared At the middle point of the common measure of life but half still upon the road. Fast and faster as the ranks grow thinner. They that remained till now become weary and lie down to rise no more. At threescore and ten a band of four hundred struggles on: At ninety these have been reduced to a handful of trembling patriarchs. . . . One lingers, perhaps, a lonely marvel till the century is over. We look again and the work of death is finished"... BURGESS.

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"One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet . . . Another dieth in the bitterness of his soul." Job 21:23-25, Death's sharpest impact comes to those with plenty, yet who are unprepared.

"How shocking must thy summons be, O Death,
To him that is at ease in his possessions;
Who counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come"

ROBERT BLAIR, "The Grave"

It has been said that Alexander the Great came upon Diogenes as he searched among a pile of human bones. "What are you doing?" inquired Alexander. "I am looking for your father's bones," said Diogenes, "but I cannot tell them from the bones of his slaves."

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MAN DIES?

When man was created his body was first formed of dust Then God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul: Genesis 2:7. He became a living, thinking, feeling, active being. He had not existed before.

When man dies the simple opposite of the creative process takes place.

First, "his breath goeth forth:" Psalm 146:4. Said Job, "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:40. And again, "The spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3. This is the "spirit of life" which God gives to all men, and at death "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it-" Ecclesiastes 12:7.

What happens to the body? This we all know. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth." Psalm 146:4. "Then shall the dust return to earth as it was." Ecclesiastes 12:7. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19.

There was a popular notion in the days of Solomon that man's spirit went up to heaven at death, and an animal's Spirit went downward into the earth. Solomon said, "Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?" Ecclesiastes 3 .A.R,V. Solomon insisted that "as the one dieth, so dieth the other" (verse 19), and "all go unto one place," and that the bodies of all "turn to dust again" (verse 20). (See also Ps: 104:26-29.)

HOW MUCH DOES ONE KNOW AFTER DEATH?

In Psalm 146:4, referred to several times, we find the simple answer, "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

Solomon declares, "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing," Ecclesiastes 9:5.

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What of the feelings, or emotions? Do they also cease at death "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." Verse 6.

The scripture is plain. When death comes, all thinking and feeling end. If they do not, the Bible is false and unreliable. Thinking and feeling did not exist before God breathed life into man, and they stop entirely when the man dies. When the electric current is turned off, the bulb is there, but light is gone. Thinking and feeling come as a result of the current of life operating in conjunction with the body and brain of man. When the body gets too much out of order, or the current of life is turned off, or both, all thinking and feeling cease.

ORIGIN OF THE NATURAL IMMORTALITY THEORY

Who started the theory of the natural immortality of man, of his soul? The Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul, and passed the doctrine on to the Greeks and Romans, who in turn gave it to Christianity. But this belief did not originate with the Egyptians, but with the devil himself. God said, "Thou shalt surely die," Genesis 2:17. The devil said, "Ye shall not surely die." Genesis 3:4. The devil deceived Eve and nearly the entire world. Countless millions live in fear, dread, and superstition and under religious tyranny because of the devil's lie and by reason of the multiplied horrible theories that have been built upon this original falsehood,

After man sinned God removed him from the tree of life, lest he live forever (Genesis 3:22, 23). God did not propose to have everlasting sinners.

DEATH IS LIKE SLEEP

Death is like sound sleep. There is no consciousness of the passing of time. When David is resurrected it will seem but the next instant after he died-"The twinkling of an eye" as it were. In the Bible death is called "sleep" fifty-four times. Said Paul, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead]," 1 Thessalonians 4:13,

In sound sleep there is no thought or remembrance, A man lies on a bed in complete coma, His heart beats, his blood circulates, and his breathing is regular, Yet he knows absolutely nothing about anything, Someone hits him over the head and kills him, Then, he knows everything, some say. Says the Bible, "The dead know not any thing." Ecclesiastes 9:5,

It was Thomas Gray, in his well known "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," who wrote:

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave,

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"Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?"

"If a man die, shall he live again?" Job 14:14. That was the question raised by suffering Job as his body wasted away and his bones stared at him through his dry and wrinkled skin and the breath of life seemed ready for silent departure.

A friend of mine preached at a funeral in Hollywood, California. When he had finished, one of the bereaved daughters stepped to the casket and said:

"Now the doctor has made his speech; I will make mine. Up at the university the professors have shot the Bible full of holes. We no longer believe in traditional religion; in this twentieth century that is passé."

"Mamma never recalled any events of her life before she was born into this world; neither do we, for there is no previous life. And when she dies that's the end of everything for her, Of course, she still lives in our hearts as a beautiful memory, but that's all. And since there is no previous life and no hereafter for any of us, even a funeral service is useless and senseless. Now, I do not know what you will think of my speech, but this is what I believe."

The young woman stated some truth. But here are two things she ought to consider: (1) Death does not end all, because "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27, (2) "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Acts 24:15.

THE BIBLE PICTURE OF THE RESURRECTION

1. Christ said that He would "be raised again the third day." Matthew 16:21.
2. Afterward Jesus said, "It is I myself." Luke 24:39,
3. The angel said, "He is risen," Mark 16:6.
4. Again, "All that are in the graves shall, , . come forth," John 5:28, 29,
5. Paul said, "Christ, , . the first-fruits of them that slept," 1 Corinthians 15:20.
6. Again, "Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Verse 23.
7. "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, Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

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From this we see that the resurrection from the dead is the real hope of those who "sorrow not, even as others." Verse 13. Furthermore, Paul makes it clear that Christians who live to the second coming of Christ will go to heaven "together with" the resurrected righteous. They will "not prevent [go before] them which are asleep," Verse 15. And those who have died will not reach heaven before those who live to see Christ come. "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hebrews 11:40. Paul will receive his reward at Christ's coming (2 Timothy 4:8). Even one thousand years after David's death Peter declared that the patriarch was not yet in heaven (Acts 2:29, 34).

Paul goes so far as to say that if the dead do not rise, then those who have died believing in Christ are perished, and that is the end of it all (1 Corinthians 15:16-18). Thank God, the dead shall rise.

THE HOPE OF BOTH OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

Not only does the New Testament set forth this resurrection hope, but the Old Testament does also. In fact, Job answers his own question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job 14:14. Follow his thoughts: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come," Verse 14. Where would he wait? "If I wait, the grave is mine house."

Job 17:13. When would the "change" come? "Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." Job 14:15. Yes, this is as Jesus put it, "All that are in the graves -II hear his voice, and shall come forth." John 5:28, 29. What would be the nature of the change?

For one thing, there would be an actual, bodily resurrection. Said Job, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" Job 19:25, 26.

The apostle Paul adds this: "We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall, all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: . . . the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. . . . "This mortal must put on immortality." 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

Speaking of Christ and His second coming, Paul finishes with these words: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Philippians 3:21.

THE MYSTERY

Yes, it is a mystery. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; . . . , we shall all be changed." Michael Faraday was a great scientist. "One of Faraday's workmen by accident dropped a little, highly valued silver cup in a strong acid bath. In a little while it utterly

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disappeared "But when Faraday came in and learned of it, he said nothing, cast another acid into the jar, and the silver soon precipitated—a shapeless mass, indeed, but every grain was there. A few days later it came back from the silversmith a more beautiful cup than ever. May not God as readily restore our bodies after the decay and disorganization of death?"

THE HOPE

Death is an enemy (I Corinthians 15:26), Mother Eve chose to believe that she would not die, but rather enter upon a higher plane of experience, and become as the gods. How many millions have since been misled as she was, believing that death is not real at all but just the gateway of release into a higher realm! However, dark as death is, it is not hopeless, It does not end all for the Christian. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In Christ we have hope of life, and without Him we can anticipate only everlasting destruction at the time of the second death. The voice of Jesus at His second coming will open the tomb of every saint.

"At the sounding of the trumpet, when the saints are gathered home,
We will greet each other by the crystal sea;
When the Lord Himself from heaven to His glory bids them come,
What a gathering of the faithful that will be!"

Today we may see but some picture of a loved one gone, touch some trinket made sacred by his contact, hear some sacred strains he always loved, cherish a heartful of memories from the yesteryears.

With all of these there is a mingling of joy and sorrow, of peace and pain. But on some tomorrow there shall be life and joy and love forever.

I KNOW

"Although I grieve now you are gone,
Black night precedes the fairest dawn.
"The flowers bloom, then fall asleep,
And buried lie in earth beds deep,
Then rise anew when comes the spring
To prove a resurrectioning.

"Someday the angels' reveille
Will call you back again to me.
"Then we shall share eternal spring,
And view its glorious blossoming,
And all the stars shall shine anew
When love supreme comes smiling through."
HELEN M. JOHNSTON