

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

George Burnside

Well, It will certainly be wonderful when there is no more death. On one occasion Alexander the Great said that he saw Diogenes the Old Greek philosopher searching among a pile of old bones, so he went over and he said, "Well, philosopher, what are you looking for?"

"Well," the old man said, "I am looking for something that I can't find." Alexander the Great said, "What is that?" He said, "I am trying to find the difference between your father's bones and the bones of his servants and I can't find any difference." Alexander's father had been the King of Macedon, but in death he was the same as his servants.

Death has been referred to as the great leveler, for all are equal in the silence of the grave. Their wealth forever ceases to influence.

Position avails nothing, and the color line will be forever washed away in the silence of the dreamless dust.

Death is not only the great leveler, but it is looked on as the most certain event that can come to the sons of men. We talk about a thing being as sure as death. 109,300 people have died today. In the short hour that it will take to read this paper, another 4,500 people will go out into the land of silence.

We all have friends who have crossed the river of death, hence we are anxious to know something about their condition. Where are the dead? What do they know?

Death is not only looked on as the most certain event, but it is certainly the most dreaded experience for nothing is prized more than life, and nothing is dreaded more than death. And regardless of where you go among the heathen or otherwise, death is dreaded. It is a cruel thing and the Bible recognizes it as a cruel enemy for we read in the word of God, that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Death is an enemy and let us always remember that. Some people have tried to picture death as a friend. Death isn't a friend. Human beings dread it.

Now why is death so dreaded? One of the main reasons why death is dreaded is because people have such confused ideas regarding death. Many feel that it is like taking a leap into the unknown when they face death. They should not. There is no reason for that, but I find that humanity certainly has confused ideas regarding death. The Roman Catholic believes that the majority of people who die are in purgatory. The vast majority think that when they die they immediately go into terrible suffering. Many expect to go into hell fire where they will stay for all eternity, or if they are not wicked, into purgatory to be there at least for some time. And if what they teach is true there must be a tremendous lot of people tonight in agony. In fact they can only guarantee 1,500 people in heaven. That is their official figure. This is not too good. That is not one a year since the time of Christ. That is all they are sure of. They are positively sure of at least two in hell - Judas Iscariot and Martin Luther. They are certain they are both in hell. After I had preached some time ago, some people came along and they thought there would be a third one there before very long. I had a foggy idea just who they were driving at too. But I went to bed and slept just as soundly as ever.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The Christian Scientists tell us there is not such a thing as death. They try to get rid of death by denying it. They say there is no pain, but I notice they wriggle just as much in a dentist's chair as anybody else. Denying a fact never shifts a fact, and Christian Scientists can deny death but they die just the same. I stood, not long ago, at the grave of Mrs. Baker Eddy. All through her life she denied the existence of death, and when she died in Boston, her people, couldn't believe that she had died, and they kept her body for a couple of weeks until the Government compelled them to bury her, and they expected her to come to life again. She had denied it all the time. Denying death doesn't shift it. They can deny it but they die just the same as others.

The Theosophist tries to get rid of death by saying that God is in us and hence we cannot die, but they die just the same.

Unbelievers just ignore the thought of death, but that doesn't help them because they die. And I don't know of anything more pathetic than to be at the deathbed of an unbeliever.

Ignoring it doesn't shift it. I find that most churches nowadays, believe that somehow or other we don't really die, that death is not really the termination of life. It is the door to heaven and the next moment after you die you are in heaven. Well now, if that is so, they should be very, very happy to die. If I believed that I would be praying to die. But evidently they must have a lot of misgivings about it for I notice they put off going there just about as long as the doctor can keep them out.

However, friends, when you have summed up all the feelings of humanity there is really only one authority, and that is the One who made man in the beginning and who knows all about man. And the One who came down here and died and rose again, and lives forever, knows exactly the condition of man in death. He knows all about it and He has written it in a book so that we too might know, and the Bible is a very plain spoken, a very frank, and a very understandable book. That is what I like about it. It doesn't beat around the bush - it is very frank and very plainly spoken.

Now, I will take you back, first of all to the oldest statement in the Bible - away back to the book of Job, which is probably the oldest book in the Bible. And away back here in the 14th chapter of Job I read this statement, verse 10, "But man dies and wastes away. Yes man gives up the ghost and where is he?" That is the question. "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up: so man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Then God told Job to write down in his book that when men die they will lie down in the grave and they won't rise until the heavens be no more. That leaves you right away down there to the last days when Jesus comes and the heavens part as a scroll, when God is about to make a new earth. "They will lie down and rise not till the heavens be no more." "O that thou would hide me in the grave, that thou would keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come."

And so God taught Job away back there in the very beginning, that a man would die and he would lie down and he wouldn't rise until the last day when Jesus came back again. And friends, that is the best program too.

I was talking to a young lady some time ago and she said, "Mr. Burnside, I like to think that my grand mother is looking over the portals of heaven seeing me try to live the Christian life down here." "Well," I said, "that would be very nice, or at first glance it would be very nice if the majority of the people today, and the young people of today, were walking the right roads, But", I said, "Tell me, how could mothers in heaven enjoy heaven when they see the way the majority of young people are acting today, probably their own sons and daughters. Would they enjoy heaven?" Never! And God has a far better program for I read in verse 21, "His sons come to honor and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them."

The dead, God says, do not know what is happening on this earth.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

What else do you know Job? Chapter 19:25, "For I know that my redeemer lives, 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."

Something else Job knew. He knew that he had a living Redeemer who would come back again to this earth at the last day, and although this body may crumble away to dust he says, "In my flesh I am going to see God." God is coming back again to raise the dead and to make people real and Job said, "In my flesh I am going to see God."

Then Job looked to the resurrection at the last day. And friends, there will be a resurrection and that is the hope of the dead. That is why all through the Bible the great hope of the Christian is held out as the resurrection, the hope is not in death. You will never read that our hope is in death. The record says that death is an enemy.

Paul says In Corinthians, that if the dead don't rise then those that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished, they are gone. They are not home in heaven, they are not In purgatory, they are not in hell, they are in the grave, and their only hope is a resurrection from the dead, when In our flesh we shall see God.

And I want to tell you, that what Job was taught away back there is the very same thing that Jesus taught when he walked this earth. I am over here now in the gospel of Saint John 5:28,29. Notice how clear and how simple these statements are. "Marvel not at this," Jesus said, "For the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice."

Where are the dead? Jesus said they are in the grave. But the day is coming when they are going to hear His voice and they shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. So both the good and the evil are in the graves.

People are not suffering hell-fire tonight, they are not sweltering in purgatory. There is not a single soul In purgatory, they are in the grave. They are not sweltering in hell.

God told Peter that He knew how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. You remember Jesus said that when the angels come at the last day they will gather up the righteous and the tares (wicked) will be gathered and burned. And Jesus said, "So shall It be at the last day." For the destruction of the wicked in fire, will be at the last day. They are not welcome in hell tonight.

When we come to a subject like this we ought to be very careful that we do not put the character of our God at stake. We ought to be very careful. You remember Jesus said that few people would find the way of life but the majority would go in the broad road. Isn't that so? Then if the Popular theory is true that when you die you don't really die but you keep on living and you go to purgatory or hell or heaven, then the majority of people are sweltering in hell or purgatory tonight, because Jesus said the majority would be lost. And that puts the character of our God in jeopardy for it would be very, very hard to love a God that could punish people on and on throughout the ceaseless ages of all eternity. You would dread a God like that. It may make you read the Bible, but it won't make you love God. And the Bible says the first great requirement is to love God, in fact God says if you don't love you can have all the faith and anything else you like but it won't avail you anything.

And you remember Jesus made a very plain statement here in verse 13, and made mention of the fate of the wicked showing that God does not punish people and have them roasting on, and on, and on, throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. When I stepped down from the box, I remember an old Methodist lay preacher came over and he said, "Hold on brother, hold on a minute, come over here." He said, "What you are preaching is quite right, I know that is right." He said, "That is what the Bible teaches, but don't tell the people that or we won't get them to church." What we need is truth.

The dead haven't been ascending up. Jesus said "No man has ascended up to heaven but he that comes down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Jesus came down from heaven and He

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

ascended back. But, Jesus said "Men don't ascend to heaven." So the good people don't go to heaven when they die.

Now of course we do have one or two exceptions clearly stated in the Bible - Moses, Elijah, and Enoch, and a clear exception stated in the Bible does not break the rule. Thus the Bible says, "All die," and then gives you at least two men who did not die. When you have exceptions clearly stated it does not break the rule.

But just as all die, friends, generally speaking, people don't ascend to heaven. And the only way that you will ever get to heaven is when Jesus comes back again and gathers you up and takes you home. This is the way you are going. And if Jesus does not come again and raise the dead, Paul says the dead are perished, they are gone, and you will never get to heaven unless Jesus comes and takes you there. You will not ascend on your own power or any other way. Then friends, that is the experience that runs all through the Bible.

Let us notice David's experience. You remember David, God says, was a man after His own heart. When you come here into the second chapter of Acts, notice how clear it is. Acts 2:34, "For David is not ascended into the heavens:"

Now David was a good man, and David had been dead a thousand years when St. Peter on this occasion made that statement. He said David has not ascended into the heavens. Good people do not go to heaven when they die. David had been dead a thousand years and David said, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." That is when Jesus comes again and we will be like Him. David said, "I'll be satisfied on that great day when I awake in the likeness of God." David did not say, "I'll be satisfied with death," but, "when I awake on the resurrection morn in the likeness of Christ."

Now let me read you a plain statement over here in the New Testament and then we will get on and deal with some other very, very interesting phases because it is an interesting subject, and friends, every child of God should know about it. We will notice how important this subject is as we go along.

1 Thessalonians 4:14, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep." apostle Paul is here talking about the dead. You know some fifty-five times in the Bible, death is referred to as a sleep. A mother does not regard her baby as dead when he is sleeping in the next room. Why? Because she can step in and wake the little one whenever she wants. But that baby is totally unconscious. She can pass by and the baby knows nothing at all about the mother. It is totally unconscious, yet the mother can wake it.

And so death is referred to as a sleep because the resurrection is certain and God will awake people from the dead.

But Paul said, "I would not have you to be ignorant brethren concerning those which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." For take away the Christian hope and people have no hope beyond death.

I have just been reading a history of Egypt. I was interested in it because I have been down there in the tombs of those ancient Egyptian people. They went through all the ritual and all the ceremony regarding the burial of their dead and they put them in there into magnificent tombs, the most wonderful tombs the world has ever seen. And they sealed them up for eternity and they never expected them to come out, and there was a lot of lamentation. They sorrowed as those who had no hope.

But we do not need to sorrow today. Why? "Concerning them which are asleep, sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Why? For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." He is going to bring them right home. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

You see, people today have just got it reversed. They get the idea today that dead people get to heaven before the living, but back there they thought that living people would get to heaven a long while before the dead, if the dead got there at all. And so Paul wrote to them. He said that those who have the privilege of being alive and remain into the coming of the Lord will not precede them which are asleep. Why? Listen: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead In Christ shall rise first." The righteous will rise when Jesus comes. "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." Then we are all going home to glory together. What a wonderful day that will be.

You do not flit off to heaven one by one by the way of the shroud, the undertaker, the grave and weeping eyes. I have often thought as I have stood at the open grave, and I have seen loved ones lowered and I have looked there into the agonized faces and the weeping eyes of loved ones, "If this is the road to heaven it is a very, very sad road." But it is not. Death is an enemy and they do not flit off one by one to heaven. God says when Jesus comes again the dead in Christ shall rise and the living saints will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. And on that wonderful day He will gather up His people whether they are dead or whether they are alive, and sweep them home to glory.

The first thing that will happen will be the resurrection of the dead. People say to me, "But isn't it only the body that dies? Don't we have a soul inside us that can't die?" That is the idea that most people have, so I will read to you the very first statement in the Bible regarding the soul. Genesis 2:7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

God created man in the beginning and He made man out of clay and there he lay, a clay man and that is perfectly clear. And every human being is made up of the same seventeen elements as in the soil right there.

You take the human brain that can think out such wonderful things. You know the composition of the human brain is as if you took a cup of water and put a pinch of dirt in it and shook it up. This is the composition of the brain.

The Bible says God made man out of the, dust of the ground. "Dust thou art" and because of sin, "unto dust thou shall return," but thank God it also says "From the dust you shall awake, and He will raise His people from the dust." God made man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, gave man power to breathe, and man became a living soul.

It did not say God had a soul there and then made a case to go over it. Or He did not make a clay man and then inject a soul into him. He had a clay man and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

I could say there are so many hundred souls in a meeting and that would be correct. You talk about the "Poor old soul" and that is quite correct, not a disembodied thing running around - they are real. And all through the Bible you will find that the word "soul" refers to real people, in fact we just read a text over there in Peter talking about the flood - "Wherein eight souls were saved by water." They were the eight people who went into the ark, they were real people, they were not disembodied souls, you do not have them.

You see a clay man, (the body) plus the breath, equals a living soul. If you take away the breath what have you got? You have only got a clay body that crumbles back to dust.

You say, "Well the soul must be somewhere." Now, you take it this way. You have an electric light. It takes two-things to make that light. You have got a bulb, plus the electricity. Cut off the power and where is the light? You say, "it must be somewhere." Well, you tell me where.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

And so it is, our hope is not in some immortal soul that is in us, for the Bible says, "God only hates immortality." You and I are not immortal. Immortality, that is the power that never dies, can be conferred only at the coming of Jesus. In the meantime we are mortal, we are subject to death and the soul can die. Eight times in the Bible it says the soul can die. Here is one In Ezekiel 18:4 "As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, it shall die."

People say, "But that is only the body, Mr. Burnside, It is only the body that sins." Is it? If my hand steals something, what is doing the stealing, my hand or my mind? If I chop my hand off it won't make me an honest person. That hand makes no movement unless my brain tells it, isn't that so? It is my brain that does the sinning, the hand only does what it is told and it is the part of you that sins that is the part that will die if you do not repent and turn to Christ and obey Him. "The soul that sins, it shall die." You are not Immortal and your only hope of Immortality is in Jesus and His return.

You say, "What about animals, do they have souls?" Yes, the Bible says that animals have souls. They have the breath of life. You turn over there in Revelation 16 and it says, "Every living soul in the sea died." Animals have souls, they are living souls, they have the power to live.

Do not go away and say that I said that human beings are like animals. I do not say that at all. Human beings are on a far higher plane than animals. But as far as a soul is concerned they have a somewhat similar condition. Bible says they have the breath of life. Everything that had the breath of life we are told, was destroyed in the flood. They went out, they had the power to breathe, they were destroyed.

Do not go away and say that I say that people die like animals, that is not true. Man was made in the image of God. God gave him capabilities far beyond the animals. He gave humans a conscience. He gave them the power to worship Him, that is something evolutionists cannot explain. Where did man get a conscience from? No animals have the power to worship God. Mankind is well above the animals. Mankind has a conscience and that conscience deals with Him.

Some people start to get worried about what they stole and they take it back. You will get dogs that will steal a string of sausages from the butcher's shop, but you never knew a dog that had a troubled conscience and took them back. Man is well above the animals, but in some things we parallel the animals. Isn't that so? God says they have a soul, they have a breath of life.

What is the spirit? You read over there in Job 27:3, "The spirit of man is in his nostrils." In fact that word "spirit" is the same word that is translated breath and wind. God breathed into man and gave him power to breathe. If he stops breathing he goes back to dust and when the breath is gone he is no more a living soul, he crumbles back to dust. And you and I do not have power to live forever, we do not have anything inside us that can keep on living, that is why death is an enemy.

God says the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Some time ago when I was over there in New England in America, I was very interested in some of the things they had written on their tombstones. They had a very morbid idea of what to put on tombstones. But here is one that was rather interesting. "Under these trees and beneath this sod, lies the body of Solomon. It is not himself, it is just his pod, it shelled out his soul and has gone up to God. Well, Solomon may have been a good man, but he did not shell out his soul and go up to God, not a bit. When he died, he died completely. "The soul that is in us it shall die."

Well now, how do the dead spend their time? Turn over to Ecclesiastes. Here is a very plain clear statement and there are many of them in the Bible, and the Bible does not contradict itself. It is the same wonderful truth that runs all the way through whether you turn to the statements of Jesus, or Solomon, or Job, or Paul. It is the same great story all the way through.

Ecclesiastes 9:5, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love and their hatred and their envy, is now perished." They can not love, they can not hate, they can not do anything for they know not anything.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

You know a lot of people are terrified of the dead. They think there is some hobgoblin going to come back and haunt them. You never need to be afraid of the dead.

Some people were a bit horrified when I said that I had slept for two nights in an old Edomite tomb over there in Petra. Well, I slept alright. In fact I stayed in the cemetery for some weeks and slept as sound as anything.

You never need to be afraid of the dead. The dead cannot come back and haunt you. The Bible says their love, and their hatred, and their envy is perished. You may need to fear the living sometimes, but you never need to fear the dead. And unless Jesus comes again, well then, there will be nothing to them.

Verse 10: "Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goes." The dead do not worry about things, they are asleep. In Psalm 146:4 it says, "In that very day," that is when a man dies, "his thoughts perish." You can see how logical that is.

People tell me the soul is something that lives and you cannot kill it. I have had scores tell me that. In fact I met a lady not long ago who tried to convince me that this body was only a shell and the real person, the soul or the spirit, she just did not know what it was. I said, "You explain it to me." "Well" she said, "there is George Burnside, his body is only a shell but the real person is there, and when you die the real person just steps out and leaves the shell. And God Himself cannot kill that soul. It is immortal." "Well," I said, "If you get your arm chopped off, where is your real arm? It has gone hasn't it? If God cannot kill it the doctor can."

Tell me, when you 90 in to have an operation you go under anaesthetic, where is your immortal soul? If God cannot kill it the doctor can certainly put it out.

I remember I had an operation some time ago. I had my tonsils out over in a Tasmanian hospital. They wheeled me in there at 8 o'clock in the morning. I had a chat with the doctor and the nurse and they told me to breathe heavily. You know the story. The next moment I was waking up and I looked around and lo and behold, I was back in the bed. It seemed just like a flash. I thought, bother it all, they did not think they were worth taking out. I felt a bit annoyed. And then I swallowed, and yes, they had fixed me alright. I looked up at the clock and it was four hours later.

Time had ceased, and that is the way it will be in death. Time is nothing. You will close your eyes in death and the next moment it will seem it is the coming of Jesus. Just like that.

Have you ever been knocked out? What do you know? When I was younger I used to like to do a bit of boxing. You do not need to be nervous, I never did much damage. The boys said I made a pretty good punch ball and I have been knocked out once or twice. And what happens? Blackness hits you just like that and it is gone. One hit on the head and you know nothing. They tell me if you get an extra big hit on the head you will know everything.

It is not logical friends, it is not reasonable, it is not scientific, and it is not Scriptural. The dead know not anything.

"Well," you say, "Where did this idea come in that you have got an immortal soul that cannot die, where did it come in?" I am going to show you something very, very interesting.

Turn back to Genesis 3, and you remember God had warned our first parents if they sinned what would happen? They would die. Genesis 3:1, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field." Here you have the first seance when the devil spoke through another being.

You find out who was the one to speak through the serpent. You read over there In Revelation 12, It says It was the dragon called that old serpent, the devil and Satan. And he came along and "He said unto the

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

woman, yes, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden. And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God said you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it lest you die."

It was not a severe test that God gave to man. They were in a land of plenty, fruit in abundance, but God gave them the one test. Do not eat of that tree.

If she had not wandered away from her husband side would not have been tempted anyway, but she got sown there and she tempted the devil to tempt her. "And of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God has said, You shall not eat of it neither shall you touch it lest you die. And the serpent said unto the woman you shall not surely die."

God said, sin and you will die. The devil said, sin and you will not die. You know the words, "you cannot die, you have got something inside of you that cannot die." Now who told the truth, God or the devil? God said, "you will die." The devil said, "you will not die. You may shuffle off this mortal sphere, but you will keep on living."

And behind that devil's lie is every false religion in the whole world, for you get the truth of the condition of man in death and every false religion in the world goes. Roman Catholicism would dry up over night, for if they have not got fire in purgatory and limbo they are gone.

Paganism - all throughout the South Sea Islands, once they grasp the truth of the condition of man in death, all their paganism and their cannibalism goes like that because it is all tied up. The same with Hinduism and Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Spiritualism and so on.

The artist has illustrated it this way - God said, "You shall surely die." Satan said, "You shall not surely die." In other words, you must have something that cannot die. And from that tree of that Immortal soul theory you have got every false religion in the world, for every last one of them is founded on it.

And do you know the greatest truth we have In the whole Bible today to meet paganism in its myriad forms, is the question of the State of the Dead.

I have baptized scores and scores of Roman Catholics and I never attack Catholicism. I just start away on heaven, and the condition of man in death because they dread the thought of it. They are terrified of it.

So you think, you have got Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Spiritualism, Pantheism eternal torment that has made more atheists than anything else in the world.

People say it will get you to church. It has made millions of atheists, millions. You know Robert Ingersol who was probably the greatest infidel lecturer of recent centuries, the man who spent all his life warring against Christianity, was reared in a Protestant home. His father was a Presbyterian minister - did you know that? And one night at the age of twelve, Robert Ingersol heard a sermon on eternal torment.

I suppose it was trying to frighten people into heaven. (I saw a man down the street and on the top of his motor car was a notice, "Repent, for a red hot hell is waiting for all the unsaved.") Well, a red hot hell may drive people to their need, it may drive them to church, but it will not drive them to love God will it? And when Robert Ingersol heard that sermon he said, "If that is God, I hate Him," and he went out to war against what he believed Christianity taught. It made an atheist, and a strong atheist out of that young man, and it has produced infidels by the millions. I doubt if it has ever made a single Christian in the world, because the foundation of Christianity is love isn't it? Paul said if you have not got love, you can have all faith but it will not avail you that much, for it is only love that will keep the law of God. Love is the fulfilling of the law.

The devil has brought in these theories. Why? To put a big question mark over the character of our God. And I am sorry to say millions of professed Christians repeat it, isn't that so? I know a lot of Protestants have turned down the truth on it.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

You say, "Well, you will not hear them preach on eternal torment," but listen, if the soul is immortal and cannot die then where does it go? That is an awkward question. If it is not in heaven then it is suffering somewhere and you have got eternal suffering you cannot avoid.

But thank God, there is not a verse in the whole Bible that says people have an immortal soul. It says, "God only has immortality." And you and I need to know it for we are facing tremendous issues in these last days. Spiritualism is taking people captive by the millions. There is a power in spiritualism, but it is not the spirits of the dead. The Bible tells you exactly what it is, it is the spirits of devils and it says in the last days they will work miracles as they speak lies in hypocrisy.

We need to understand paganism and so on, the whole story runs all the way through. This wonderful truth is there in crystal clearness and we may die, close our eyes in death, and the next moment it will seem it is the coming of Jesus.

You remember Stephen, that saint of God, when he preached there in the book of Acts 7:55 "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." It looked to Stephen as though Jesus had stood up to lift him right home to heaven. "And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Verse 60. "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." And to Stephen it would seem as though the next moment Jesus was lifting him home.

Plenty of people on their deathbeds see Jesus. I believe it is true. I have seen some wonderful Christians die and to them they will close their eyes in death, but the next moment it is the coming of Jesus, when He lifts His people home. That is the reason why all through this dear old Book of God, your hope is not in death but in the Second Coming of Christ. If Christ does not come again and raise the dead then those that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

And I want you to remember the only way you will receive life is through Christ. I am reading to you now from 1 John 5:11, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life." Then that life is right there in Christ. You and I do not have immortality and the only way we can ever have that life is by having Jesus. We need Him, we must have Him, and the big question is, do you have the Son of God, do you have Christ?

I was over there in Italy some time ago and I saw the wonderful works of Michael Angelo. He was a wonderful artist and a great sculptor. He used to train young men. And on one occasion there was one of his pupils who was a very bright boy, and he carved a statue which to him seemed as though it was perfect. He thought he would like to get Michael Angelo's criticism. And so that he could get the unbiased criticism of Michael Angelo, he hid behind the curtain. Michael came along and looked at that statue for a few minutes and then turning to the students he said, "It lacks one thing," and walked away. The young man behind the curtain was disappointed. He wondered what his statue lacked. He got his friends to go along and ask Michael just what it was that statue lacked. Michael said, "It lacks one thing all right, it lacks life." And there are a lot of people in this world today who look like Christians and they may be very good, but if they have not got Jesus, they lack life. "He that hath the Son hath life." If you have not got Christ you do not have life. You and I must depend on Christ for life, for time, and for eternity. Let us make sure friends, that we have Christ, for that is the only way we can ever have life, and let us always remember that.

Let us close this meeting with prayer.

"Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee again tonight, for Thy presence, for Thy love, for the clearness of Thy Truth. Teach us Lord, to be built up in Thy holy faith. May this congregation never be deceived by the arrows of these last days, but may Thy word become more precious to them. May they trust Jesus day by day for time and for eternity. May all their hopes of life and everything else be seated in Him. Teach us Lord, to believe on Thee, to trust Thee, and to depend on Thee every step of the way. Come very near to us

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

now Lord, in this little after meeting. Make it a wonderful meeting. We thank Thee for Thy presence in them in the past. Come very near Lord, and grant that not a single soul will go away that has a need of Thee tonight, but make It a wonderful meeting as we wait upon Thee, for Jesus' sake, Amen."