

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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## Gathered to His People

The whole orthodox conception of man's nature and the state of man between the time of death and resurrection rests entirely upon a foundation of inferences that are drawn from the Word of God. When one becomes familiar with the entire portion of the Word in which these inferences are found, it is discovered that most of these proof texts do not even deal with the subject they are supposed to prove.

A clear example of an important and far-reaching doctrine being based entirely upon inferences is found on **page 702 of the Scofield Reference Bible**. It is stated there, "that life and consciousness continue between death and resurrection is directly affirmed in Scripture." When a strong statement such as this is made, one would expect to find a list of passages where this "direct affirmation" is found. Furthermore, in a carefully edited Reference Bible it is normal to expect that the strongest possible references would be given in support of such a statement.

Eight passages are cited where this "direct affirmation" is to be found. One is from the Old Testament and seven are from the New Testament. They are, Isa. 14:9-11; Matt. 22:32; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31; John 11:26; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:21-23; Rev. 6:9-11. We are led to expect that in these eight passages we will find "direct affirmation" that life and consciousness continue between death and resurrection. Let us examine the first reference, the only one given from the Old Testament.

**"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee: even all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." Isa. 14:9-11.**

I leave it to the conscience of every reader to say for himself whether it is "directly affirmed" in this passage "that. life and consciousness continue between death and resurrection. If this obscure passage is the best proof that can be cited from the Old Testament for the orthodox position, then that position is without foundation in the Old Testament.

Those who take their stand upon the testimony of God's Word as to the meaning of death and the state of man. between death and resurrection are called upon continually to answer arguments which have no foundations except some inference drawn from some statement in the Word. Just as soon as the frailty of these inferences is demonstrated the proponents immediately turn to another one. And when all of them have been exhausted, they begin all over again. I have come to expect that when the inferences drawn from "the souls under the altar" in Revelation 6 have been refuted that the proponents of the orthodox viewpoint will bring up inferences drawn from the phrase "gathered to his people," which is first found in Genesis. No attention is paid to all the direct affirmations in regard to the state of the dead between Genesis and Revelation. For example one does not need to draw inferences from a statement such as is found in **Genesis 3:19**.

**"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, until you return unto the ground; for out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and unto dust you will return."**

Anyone who can read this and continue to say that Adam is anywhere else but in the dust until the moment of resurrection, not only does not believe the Bible, he does not believe God. And if any should insist that this refers to Adam's body, then I will insist that if this does not refer to Adam, then there is not a line in the Word of God that does refer to Adam.

At the present time, a protagonist of the orthodox viewpoint has resurrected the inferences that have many times been drawn. from the phrase "gathered to his people." This phrase is supposed to teach that the moment an Old Testament saint died, he went to meet his people and to be joined in fellowship with those who had gone before him. Inferentially, this phrase is supposed to prove that men are alive between death and resurrection. The writer referred to examines some of the nine occurrences of this phrase in the Old Testament, but neglects to deal with one very important occurrence. He also fails to examine a very important companion reference from. the New Testament, and ignores the last half of the most important companion reference from the Old.. I refer to 2 Kings 22:20; Acts 13:36 and Genesis 15:15.

In **Genesis 15:15** we read the words which God spoke directly to Abraham.

**"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age."**

Only by the most willful perversion of Scripture can the first part of this verse be made to refer to Abraham, while the second part be made to refer to his body. The one who was to go to his fathers is identical with the one who was to be buried in a good old age.

The phrase "go to thy fathers" is a much stronger phrase than "gathered to his people." It is very definite, while the second one mentioned is not so definite. Yet this definite statement is not appealed to, for all who try to use it find themselves in difficulty because of the last half of the verse in which it appears, also because of the character of Abraham's fathers.

Joshua 24:2 reveals beyond all question that Abraham's fathers were idolators. When God called Abraham He commanded him to separate himself from his father's house. Therefore, even though it states that Abraham was to go to his fathers, the fact that his fathers were idolators makes it impossible for us to believe that this statement teaches that Abraham went to have "sweet intercourse with his sainted progenitors." His progenitors were not saints.

The meaning of "go to thy fathers" is controlled, limited and explained by the statement that follows it - "thou shalt be buried." The first statement cannot mean more than the second statement permits it to mean. This demands that the first statement be recognized as exactly what it is - a figure of speech. To avoid misunderstanding, I would insert here a word in regard to figures of speech.

Many Christians, refusing to obey the admonition, "think on these things" throw up their hands in despair at the least mention of a figure of speech. They seem to think that these are incomprehensible to the average student.

Last year my daughter was then fourteen years of age and a student in the second year of high school. Upon my return home after a few days absence, she happily, announced to me that she had been studying figures of speech in high school, and had learned to identify by name fourteen of them. She knew of my interest in this subject, and we discussed it at length, finding much pleasure in picking the figures out of our own conversations, out of the newspapers and from the radio. She was fascinated by *onomatopoeia* - probably because its name rolls from the tongue so easily once one has learned to pronounce it.

Among the figures she learned to identify was the one called *euphemism*. This is the figure by which a harsh and disagreeable expression is changed for a pleasant and agreeable one, or where an offensive word or expression is changed for a gentle one. I showed her some Biblical examples of this figure, among them **the statement "go to thy fathers", which is a more pleasant way of saying "you will die," which is exactly what it means.**

A clear example of this figure is seen in the words of Christ in **John 11:11.**

**"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."**

It is impossible for anyone to read these words, then say that there is no figure of speech here. Our Lord meant literally that Lazarus was dead and He was going to Bethany to raise him from the dead. The disciples turned His figures into factual language and said: **"Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well."**

This demonstrates that complete misunderstanding and confusion occur when figures of speech are ignored. Therefore, our Lord corrected them by saying plainly **"Lazarus is dead."**

When the figure *euphemy* is found in the Bible it is always an honest figure. Man uses it dishonestly to pervert and hide the truth. When God said that Abraham would "go to his fathers," Abraham knew very well that his fathers had returned to the soil and were in the state of death. He was to join them in this state. And lest men should pervert the figure into a fact, the Spirit of God adds at once - **"thou shalt be buried."**

In **2 Kings 22:20** we read God's word to Josiah as follows:

**"Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace."**

Here we have a verse which sheds light upon the phrase "gathered unto thy fathers." If the euphemistic language of this verse is changed to factual language it would say bluntly, "Behold therefore, you will die and you will be buried in peace."

Paul in **Acts 13:36**, says of David:

**"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid (added) unto his fathers, and saw corruption."**

When this verse is considered along with Peter's statement of David in Acts 2 it reveals to us that "added to his fathers" does not mean that David went at death to some place where his ancestors were congregated, living and happy.

**"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." Acts 2:29.**

**"For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool." Acts 2:34-35.**

In **Genesis 35:29** we read:

**"And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."**

Of this passage the writer already referred to has this to say:

"The point to be noticed here is that the patriarch was gathered to his people immediately after his death and even before his burial, so that in no wise it could apply to his burial."

This is simply the magician's old trick of doing something obvious but unimportant to divert the attention, while some secret and important maneuver is performed unobserved. If "gathered to his people" means that he was taken to join them in some place of bliss, how then did his sons bury him? The important point to note here is that the one who gave up the ghost was the one who died, and the one who died was the one who was gathered to his people, and the one who was gathered to his people was the one who was buried. Every statement in this passage refers to Isaac, and if the words "his sons buried him" do not refer to Isaac then there is no statement in the Word of God that refers to Isaac.

Many champions of the orthodox viewpoint hesitate to make use of the phrase "gathered to his people" to prove that they went to join their people in a place of bliss because these very words are used of the "wild man" Ishmael. The writer referred to swallows this difficulty with one gulp. He says:

"Upon the basis of this phrase I confidently expect to meet Ishmael some day in that land of fadeless glory for which all the weary pilgrims are yearning."

These platitudes are used so that it will not be necessary to identify the place of meeting. When one recognizes the celestial destiny that God has allotted to the members of the Church which is His body, he will not be willing to confess that his hope is to be where Ishmael is going to be.

In conclusion, I would state that it is impossible for me to believe that men are alive when they are dead. The Bible declares that they are dead, and no inference drawn from such phrase as "gathered to his people" can ever be allowed to contradict the plain statements of the 'Word of God.

Christ said, "Lazarus is dead." He also said, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead." Peter said, "David is both dead and buried." I believe these statements.

## The End

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## ***EVIL EFFECTS OF MISREPRESENTATION***

In the previous issue I spoke of Pastor Harry Bultema of the *Berean Church* in Muskegon, Michigan, as being one who was able to differ with his brethren without becoming bitter. Since then another pamphlet has come from his pen which, to me, demonstrates that he needs to learn how to differ with his brethren without yielding to the temptation to misrepresent them or place them in a false light. His latest pamphlet is not his first offense along these lines. Several years ago he explained his failure to have any fellowship with me by saying that I believed in universal reconciliation. He did this in spite of all my public utterances to the contrary, and he did it at the very time he was intimately fellowshiping with one who was and is a confessed believer in universal reconciliation. At that time I was forced to reckon him among the number with whom it seems to be a moral principle that any evil done with one with whom they disagree doctrinally is the highest form of good.

His latest pamphlet appears under title of *Dr. E. W. Bullinger, His Verities and Vagaries*. He likes to discuss these side issues such as whether Bullinger was right or wrong, as it keeps him from the need of making any detailed and accurate statement concerning his own conviction. He refrains from making any clear statement of the particular faith which he is defending. He has ridiculed those who believe the Church began at Pentecost and he repudiates the idea that it began at Acts 28:28. However, he is reluctant to express in plain English just where and with what event he believes the Church began. He shrinks from setting forth his own views with the same boldness he uses in characterizing the views he opposes.

My only interest in Mr. Bultema's pamphlet is the last chapter. It appears under the title of *The Evil Effects of Bullinger's Teaching*. I will reproduce this chapter in full , BELOW:

Wrong teaching leads to wrong practice sooner or later, and this is evident in regard to this theory. It has created a deplorable spirit among men who are otherwise good students of the Word. It has needlessly broken up the work of God and spiritual assemblies and it has shown great riches in negatives. The practical results as the present writer has watched it in Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Holland, Grand Haven, Cadillac, Paterson, Michigan City, Chicago, Lake Forest, Milwaukee, Madison, Los Angeles, and other places has been dis-edifying instead of edifying. The practical outworkings of these two errors have been: no evangelism, no comfort, no joy, no warmth, no prayer meeting, no hell, no emotions, no eternal life, no reward of grace, no judgment seat appearing, no Lord's table, no covenantal blessings, no rapture, no bride, no Advocate, no High Priest, no intercession, no mystery of never dying, I Cor. 15, no blood of the covenant, no justification, no new birth, no Mediator between God and man (for I Timothy does not contain the mystery truth it is said), no preaching but only teaching, no confession of Christ, no elders, no deacons, no board meetings, no pastors or shepherds, only teachers, no membership, no organization, no Author and Finisher of our faith (as that is only in Hebrews), no cross (as Paul does not speak of it in the Body truth, and then it means only a pole anyway), no cross-bearing, no chastising or correction (since there is no judgment for today), no security for all the saints, no *one* church, no *one* body, no

adoption, no son ship (as one snapped, "how can members of His body be sons?") no rapture, no signs of the Kingdom in any form, no prophecy, no apostasy, no anti-christ - but why go on with this wealth of negatives which could easily be enlarged upon? It is only fair to say that neither Bullinger nor the Bullingerite brethren would take all these negatives on their reckoning, but Bullinger is largely responsible for them all; and many of his followers would say yea and amen to practically all, if only understood as being not on par with the mystery truth. At some of their Conferences the brethren laughed at their own folly and used to say ironically, "Jewish, brother, all Jewish."

In closing, it is most deplorable that bright and godly Bible students, often enlightened above the average, could have fallen into the slime pits of such a foolish and wicked teaching. It is our prayer that they "may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." II Tim. 2:26.

This chapter is sufficient to reveal the present confused spiritual state of one who at one time gave every evidence of becoming an outstanding leader in the work of uncovering and recovering the truth of God., Let the reader dwell upon each one of these negatives and he will discover here a frightful mixture of divine truth; emotionalism, ecclesiasticism, tradition and religion. He could have added *no confirmation*, but of course he was not trying to appeal to the prejudices of those reared in the Lutheran Church. *His appeal is to the prejudices of those who were reared in the covenant theology of the Dutch Reformed Church.* The reader will notice that there is nothing in this list about "no baptism." This is the one negative which Mr. Bultema himself has adopted, therefore, it is not listed among these "evil effects." About eight years ago, Mr. Bultema boldly and ruthlessly eliminated water baptism in all its forms from his church. At that time it was well known to all his intimates that this was only the first step in a program which would bring him and his people out into a full and complete practice of every principle of body truth which he now so boldly rejects. He suffered much for his stand, almost wrecking his great church over the baptism question. He ran well, but something hindered him. Today he stands as a no water fundamentalist, and has become the opponent of his traveling companions who went on when he decided to go no further.

After reading this chapter from his book reproduced above, I made a personal call at Mr. Bultema's home. We discussed this chapter at length. Bultema is a man one can talk to. He readily admitted that his reference to the "evil effects of Bullingerism" in Grand Rapids had no application to me, my work or the people to whom I minister. When I asked to whom it did apply, he mentioned the names of two of his kinsmen in Grand Rapids, neither of whom have ever been identified with me, my work, or my fellowship. When I insisted that all who read his pamphlet would be sure to think that he did refer to me under the reference to Grand Rapids, and to Garret Hazekamp under the reference to Muskegon, he admitted that this would probably happen, and promised to take some step to avoid any such misunderstanding.

Up to this time no such step has been taken, and I doubt if any can be taken. The pamphlet is being circulated, and it is apparent that Mr. Bultema prefers that all who read it will think that Garret Hazekamp and I do not believe in justification and the cross .

Therefore, in defense I would state my position on each one of these negatives he sets forth. I believe I speak also for my brother Garret Hazekamp of The Bible Fellowship of Muskegon, Michigan.

*No Evangelism:* I have repudiated entirely those forms of evangelism which produce stony-ground hearers, and church members. I consider such work to be the unfruitful works of darkness. Mr. Bultema has written of my book on "The Plan of Salvation" that it is a good gospel message.

*No Comfort:* Ask those to whom I minister about this, especially those to whom I have ministered in the tragic experiences of life. But, it is true, I have no comfort for those who cannot find comfort in the truth.

*No joy:* How does Bultema judge this? What joy does he have that I do not have? I am able to say truthfully, "My cup runneth over." Can he say any more?

*No warmth:* What kind of a thermometer does he use?

*No prayer. meeting:* "In many sermons, prayer meetings, and in books of Prayer the stated seasons of prayer are highly recommended. But if we are to pray without ceasing, and always to pray, then it is hard to see how there can be stated seasons." Harry Bultema in *The Morning Star*, July, 1942, page 8.

*No hell:* That's right, there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

*No emotions:* What would I have to do to prove to him that I do have emotions? However, true, I am not emotional.

*No eternal life:* He is not the judge in this matter.

*No reward of grace:* Better wait until rewards are given before being so sure about this.

*No judgment seat appearing:* Upon what basis will we be excused?

*No Lord's table:* Of course Mr. Bultema has "a Lord's table."

*No covenantal blessings:* I will answer this from his own words. "Sad to say, but many are all muddled up as to the covenants, but there is no excuse for this for in Romans 9:4-5 we find clearly that the covenants are confined to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh, i.e. Israel. That word alone ought to settle this question once and for all. Whenever the Church enters Jewish premises she has to pay high rent, and the Church has dearly paid for her thievery of the covenants from Israel. She has muddled her own creed and conduct, she has been blinded for the non-covenant dispensation (economy) of the Church, Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:25, and she has also shamefully forgotten that we are in Christ and therefore do not need any covenants. Covenants are made against third parties as the foes, and Satan is here the foe, hut, in Him, we can say with Him, 'Satan cometh and hath nothing in me.' We have the non-covenant riches, the unpredicted and unsearchable riches."

Harry Bultema, in *The Morning Star*, May, 1942, page 17. It is almost unbelievable that the same man who wrote this would, just sixty days later, point out as an "evil effect" of a teaching that it has "no covenantal blessings."

*No rapture:* I would direct Mr. Bultema's attention to a careful reading of 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

*No bride:* Does Bultema have a bride, or is he a part of the bride? It would be interesting to examine his teaching on this.

*No Advocate:* Just what does an Advocate do? If I need one, I have one.

*No High Priest:* And no low priests.

*No Intercession:* Is he serious, or trying to be funny?

*No mystery of never dying:* Oh yes, I have. And at the *last trump* too, which will be some time after I am done with this earth;

*No blood of the covenant:* What covenant?

*No justification:* A deliberate, unjust and unfair falsehood. In other words a lie, the origin of which can only be from the source of all lies. This one accusation caused the writing of this answer. Until such time as he retracts it publicly and ceases to circulate this charge, he will stand as one who has perpetrated a deliberate slander against men who proclaim the great truths of justification just as faithfully as he does.

*No new birth:* But, we do have a new creation.

*No Mediator between God and man:* Just *who* doesn't have a mediator?

*No preaching but only teaching:* I never would preach if it did not teach. Maybe Mr. Bultema is among that number who can preach without teaching...

*No confession of Christ:* What in the world *have* I been doing for twenty-three years? Maybe he means that we do not have people march to the front and shake our hand, which to most ecclesiastics has become the only true confession of Christ.

*No elders:* We *could* elect some, but would this make them elders?

*No deacons:* Had some when I was a Baptist, but only one of them followed me when I left. He is no longer a deacon. There are no elders or deacons in the Church which is His body.

*No board meetings:* For which I am indeed thankful.

*No pastors or shepherds, only teachers:* At least he admits we have teachers.

*No membership:* In what? Does he mean we are not even members of the body of Christ?

*No organization:* Shame on us! Must get busy and do some organizing right away. Anybody want to belong to an organization? Offices available for early applicants...

*No Author and Finisher of our Faith:* He is kidding himself, but nobody else.

*No Cross:* Let's pass over this one. If I should write anything on this I would probably say that this accusation excludes him altogether from the circle of honest and fair men.

*No. Cross-bearing:* Of course, only those who believe like Bultema does, and those who belong to his church are the only ones who ever bear the cross.

*No chastising or correcting:* I could show my scars, but these things are personal; just between my Lord and I.

*No security for all the saints:* See Romans 8:28-39.

*No one Church:* This accusation comes from the man who is a member of *The Berean Church* and also claims membership in the Church which is His body.

*No one body:* This comes from a man who holds membership in two bodies.

*No adoption:* See Ephesians 1:5.

*No sonship:* See Ephesians 1:5 again. And while you have the book open see also Ephesians 4:15, 25.

*No rapture:* He is now repeating himself. An indication of the haste and thoughtlessness that so often characterizes such diatribes as these.

*No signs of the Kingdom in any form:* I *could* make up some, but they would probably prove as unreliable as the signs which have been so boldly set forth during the past fifty years.

*No prophecy:* I have just finished teaching Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and am now teaching Daniel.

*No apostasy:* If I had apostatized, I certainly would not boast of it. I pray it will always be true of my ministry that there is no apostasy. God forbid that I shall succumb to the apostasy that is seen on every hand today.

*No anti-christ:* No, not even Mussolini.

Of course, Mr. Bultema has all of these things, and rests in the assurance that he stands perfect in all the will of God. This list shows how much stripping will have to take place before he can stand as one who is walking as a member of the Church which is His body.

I would quote the words of Paul to Mr. Bultema.

**"Do you look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's." 2 Cor. 10:7.**

Mr. Bultema is not one thing before God save that every other saint is. He does not possess one thing before God that all saints do not possess. True, many of us have no preachers, no elders, no deacons, no membership, and no organization. Nevertheless we are everything in the sight of God that he is. We are complete in Christ.

It is contrary to my purpose to make *The Word of Truth* a medium of personal controversy or personal self-defense. Ordinarily it is my policy to ignore even the rankest and most unfair criticisms. But when one with whom I have enjoyed counsel and fellowship accuses me of having

no justification or cross, whether he refers to my personal experience or my testimony, I shall raise my voice in protest. With me, the matter is now a closed incident.

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## **STUDIES IN EPHESIANS**

**Continued from Vol. 6, No.2)**

### **Ephesians 4:4-6**

**There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in! one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all. *King James Version.***

**One body, and one spirit, even as you were called also in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. *Resultant Version.***

When our great God began His work of calling out the members of the church which is His body, He created and established a divine unity which He has called the unity of the Spirit. We are not to establish this unity or create it, for God has already done this. We are admonished to devote all our energies toward guarding this unity in the bond of peace. It is as if God had said to us, "This is what I have established and this is what I desire. Now, I want you to earnestly strive to maintain this unity in the bond of peace. There will be times when it will not seem best, there will be situations when it will not appear wise, yet this is what I have established and it is what I want, so keep it. My purposes and my cause will best be served, my work will best be performed, my glory will best be manifested by maintaining this unity. Do not question my wisdom, do not think that I have not foreseen every possible situation. You may destroy your influence, you may divide the people, nevertheless, keep the unity of the Spirit and leave the consequences to me."

These words express as best as I can my own conception of the task that God has committed unto me, as one called a member of the Church which is His body, to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. It may bring me honor to keep it, or it may bring dishonor. Men may speak well of me for keeping it, or they may speak evil of me. It may bring me comforts, or it may bring me distress. Nevertheless, I must remain oblivious to all of these things, and must guard the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, with all the strength and grace that God gives me.

To me this is an individual matter. It can be nothing else. I will not waste my time seeking ninety-nine others to unite with me in forming the *American Association for Keeping the Unity of the Spirit, Otis Q. Sellers, President and Founder.* I will strive to keep the unit of the Spirit as an individual and exhort every believer I meet to do it as an individual. However, if I am the only man on earth who will walk in the light and truth of that sevenfold unity, I will walk alone, and fully believe that God will be glorified by my doing it.

The unity that we are to endeavor to keep is based upon seven great fundamental truths, each of which is characterized by the word ONE. We must know what this unity of the Spirit comprises, or we will not be able to keep it as we should.

As to the general character of these seven great truths it should be carefully noted that not one of them was true before Acts 28:28. It is easy to show that even in the Acts period there were numerous bodies, spirits, and hopes. There were lords many, different faiths; multiple baptisms, and the God of

Israel had not been set forth as one God and Father of all alike. And it must be recognized that the Apostle is not revealing that there is a body, or a Lord or a spirit. He is proclaiming and insisting that there is only one. Every one of these divine truths have been nullified and repudiated by the professing church of today. There is no use to cover up or to quibble. One may just as well face the facts. He who would walk in the light of these seven great truths must walk entirely separate from everything that travels under the name of "Church." It cannot be otherwise.

The discovery of this has caused many men to turn away from the truth. They had hoped that they could walk in the truth and continue in the church at the same time. When they discover that present truth is incompatible with everything ecclesiastical, and come to the point where the paths separate and a clear decision must be made, they decide to continue in the church. They offer many excuses for doing so, and seem able to justify themselves in what they have done. "I am not going to ruin my influence and testimony," was the defense of one. "I am not going to throw my life away," states another. "I cannot jeopardize the welfare of my wife and children," pleads a third. "It is all so confusing," claims another. I leave all such to their Lord. As for me, I intend by His grace to take the path that makes it possible for me to walk without hindrance or fear in the truth of the seven-fold unity of the Spirit. Let us consider each one of these truths.

## **One Body**

If the dictionary is consulted it will be found that one definition of the word body is, "a number of individuals or things collectively; usually as united, organized, systematized, or acting together, for some purpose; as, a legislative *body*, a *body* of troops. This is the sense in which the word is used by Paul in all places where it does not plainly refer to the material aspect of man. In the language of Paul, any two persons brought into vital union become a body. 1 Cor. 6:16. Therefore the nation of Israel was a body, the priesthood in Israel was a body, and each tribe was a body. It does not matter even if these were never called bodies. The metaphorical use of the word *body* is peculiar to Paul. . Luke **uses** it of Israel in Luke 17:37. When Paul speaks of a company of people who have been brought into vital union and relationship he refers to them as a body.

At the present time God is separating from the bulk of humanity a people whom He will use in connection with His great purpose to establish a memorial and witness to His grace. These He makes members of a special out-calling which is called by the Spirit of God, the out-calling (Church) which is His body. In relationship to this work He inspired His great apostle to proclaim "One Body." In other words, there is only one body today that God is forming only one body that He claims as His own, only one body that men can belong to and be in a body that is of God, only one body they can have membership in and have membership in something that has standing before God. This body is the Church which is His body. Nothing else is recognized by God, nothing else is important before Him, and he who belongs to the Church which is His body has membership in the one organism that is of God. Men may speak of various "Protestant bodies," and may feel that it is expedient to have membership in something else besides this "one body," but such an attitude is a complete denial of the first great truth that forms the unity of the Spirit, and it breaks a unity which we are to endeavor to keep.

As long as God's people owe allegiance to other bodies, as long as they feel that some other body is important, as long as they hold that other bodies have some standing before God, just so long will they fail to walk worthy of the calling wherewith they have been called.

God has called me as a member of the Church which is His body. This is my conviction and it is also my confession. To this outcalling I owe supreme allegiance. Man could not put me in this, and man can never remove me from it. It is my duty to exercise the greatest possible care that I never do anything in any way that will dim or deny the fact that there is *one body*,

## One Spirit

These two words express a great truth, and their exact and full meaning has long been a puzzle to this writer. In the early days of my ministry, before I became exercised about the unique truths set forth by Paul, I took it for granted that this was the Holy Spirit. This was a rather foolish assumption, for Paul is certainly not proclaiming here that God's Spirit is only one. It would be nothing new to set forth this truth here, a truth that already appears in every book of the Bible. After some study, I felt that there was a definite revelation here in regard to spirit or demon possession, and tentatively held that the words "one spirit" tell us that the only spirit that can possess a human body during this administration is the Holy Spirit. This view will be found guardedly set forth in Volume 2, page 28, of *The Word of Truth*. I am now convinced that this is not what is taught by these words.

My present understanding of the words "one spirit" is that the word *spirit* here does not refer to the Holy Spirit, or to a spirit being of any sort. In 1 Cor. 4:21 we read of the spirit of meekness, in 2 Cor. 4:13 of the spirit of faith, in Eph. 1:13 of the spirit of wisdom, in 2 Tim. 1:7 of the spirit of fear, in 1 Peter 4:14 of the spirit of antichrist. From these we learn that the word *spirit* means character, that it speaks of the temper of the mind, and of disposition and frame of mind. Does the reader recognize that every act of our lives is characterized by a spirit? Do we not speak of men having good spirits, bad spirits, mean spirits or liberal spirits? Do we not see legalistic spirits, hypocritical spirits and religious spirits? Have we not accused men of having failed to show a Christian spirit, or have complimented them for having done so?

As the administration under which we live is different from all other administrations, it follows that a certain spirit should be manifested which will distinguish us from all previous callings. The words which give the character of this spirit are found in Ephesians. They are spiritual, grace, wisdom, revelation, knowledge, unity, truth, love, tenderhearted, forgiving, understanding, strength and sincerity.

In the Pentecostal dispensation the Jew that believed would manifest a certain spirit, and the Gentile that believed would manifest another spirit. At present there can be only one spirit that truly glorifies God. It is that which is produced when the saint has been renewed in the spirit of his mind and has put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. . Ephesians 4:23.

## One Hope of Your Calling

In that calling which was Abraham's seed, there were always two hopes. From Genesis 12 to Acts 28 :28 everyone called of God was Abraham's seed. God promised Abraham great blessings upon earth. Abraham believed God and entered into the hope of great earthly blessings. Some of these could be realized in his lifetime, but the greatest of them could be realized only in resurrection. Hebrews 11 reveals that after God had revealed to Abraham this earthly hope, he set before him a heavenly hope. With this hope there was a better resurrection. In the Acts period some Jews that believed had the earthly hope, but some by faith possessed the heavenly hope.

In God's present out-calling there is but one hope. There is no choice, and faith can now secure nothing more for us in resurrection than what grace has brought us. If you do not want a position far above all heavens, if you do not want to be a witness in coming ages of the exceeding riches of the grace of God in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus, then the only possible thing left for you is resurrection after the thousand years and eonian life in the new heavens and new earth. I do not believe for one moment that those believers who repudiate and despise every truth, every principle and every purpose that is related to the Church which is His body are going to be with that body far above all heavens in the eons to come.

By this I am not teaching that there are two callings for today. The only out-calling God is forming today is the out-calling which is His body. Any man on earth who has the gospel records can believe those records and secure the great blessing that comes from believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. This will guarantee him the great blessing of eonian (eternal) life, but it does not follow that this life will be enjoyed as a member of the Church which is His body in a realm far above all heavens. Neither does it guarantee that this life will be enjoyed in the new Jerusalem or upon the earth in Israel's kingdom. Participation in any of these depends upon calling. And God is not calling men at this time to participate in the earthly or heavenly sphere of the kingdom. The only opportunity that is open to all men at all times is the opportunity to have eonian life in the eon of the new heavens and earth after the Kingdom eon has run its course.

Membership in the out-calling which is His body is dependent upon God's choice and calling. He chooses whom He will call, *and that call does not need to be answered*. This call is not to the fountain of life, it is not to the great boon of justification. It is into the Church which is His body. Let him who is called respond to it and God will seal him into a position from which he will never be removed. Remember, it is not a warrant for your apprehension. It is a call. And by its very nature a calling must be something that can be ignored and rejected.

## One Lord

In the present administration there is one Lord. The term Lord as a title of Christ refers to His authority. There is only one authority today, and no man has the right to act, speak or serve as an authority under God. This is one of the most difficult truths for men to accept, since so many want authority and the rest want someone to assume authority over them. The words ONE LORD deny the authority of every church, and if accepted would sound the death knell of all ecclesiasticism. **There is no man on earth who can as God's representative** tell us what to believe, how we are to behave, or where we should serve. All who attempt to do so are denying the Lordship of Christ.

At present no one called of God has been given one iota of spiritual power, control or authority over another believer. No instructed believer would ever yield one mite of spiritual authority to another. All who do so surrender the truth of *one Lord*.

This does not mean that we are without authority. It does not mean that we do as we please. It does mean that we recognize no authority but Christ, and we live only to please Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

## One Faith

The word *faith* here means a body of truth. When we have obeyed the command to rightly divide the Word of truth, when we have recognized the unique character of the present administration, when we have given due place to the Church which is His body, only one faith is possible.

In the Acts period there were two distinct bodies of truth. These were called the gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision. What was true of the believing Jew in the Acts period was not necessarily true of the believing Gentile. Today, there is one faith, for all that is true of one of God's saints is true of all the rest.

## One Baptism

Six years after my life became identified with the Lord Jesus Christ, I became deeply interested in progressive revelation. It began a new day *with* my Bible. Nine years later I came face to face with the baptism question and was forced to admit at once that there could be no water baptism for today. God's final word upon the subject had to be the most important word, else the whole idea of progressive revelation was an empty dream. I repudiated my own baptism and all other baptisms, and have never wavered upon this stand since that day. A fellow laborer who took the same stand said afterward that he would be glad to baptize if it would help bring men to Christ. Even if I were sure it would help bring men to Christ, I would not baptize or be baptized. The end never justifies the means. And until God takes away His final words on this subject and gives a new command, I will not baptize or be baptized. God's final words were. ONE BAPTISM.

After repudiating water baptism for this administration, I was expected at once to adopt spirit baptism as the one baptism of today. This I could not do, for the very principles that eliminated water baptism, just as surely eliminated spirit baptism. A year of intensive study followed, which resulted in my discovering three separate and clearly distinct baptisms in the Acts period. Baptism in water (Acts 1:5), and baptism in Spirit (Acts 1:5), and baptism into Christ's death. In the present administration there is only one baptism. Two have gone and one remains. And it will not take the spiritual mind long to decide that the one that remains is that glorious baptism which identifies us with Christ in His death. We are buried with Him in baptism (Col. 2:12). Let us earnestly endeavor to keep this unity by not introducing the multiple baptisms that obtained during the Acts period.

## One God and Father of All

Some read this as saying "One God and Father," but it says much more than that. Some add the words "of all," but even then the truth is not expressed. The unique truth set forth here cannot be expressed in one word less than the entire divine original of verse six: "**One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all.**" This was not true in any administration prior to the present one, and it becomes true because of the character of the special grace that is being manifested at this time. What this grace makes one member of the Church which is His body, it must make all. Even in relationship to God the Father every member is the peer of every other. None bear a special nearness, none have any monopoly upon the favors of God. He is over all, through all and in all.

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## *UNDER THE SUN*

The book of Ecclesiastes gives some of the most emphatic and positive statements that can be found in the Word of God in regard to man's nature, man's condition between death and resurrection, the meaning and nature of **sheol**, and the meaning of death. It is in this book that we read that the same event that happens to every man (death), happens also to the beasts; that as man dies, the beast dies also; that they both have one breath, so that in the matter of death man has no preeminence over the beast; that all go to one place, that all are dust and all turn to the dust again. See Ecclesiastes 3:18-20.

In this book we are told that the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything. See Ecclesiastes 9:5.

From Ecclesiastes we learn that there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in sheol. See Ecclesiastes 9:10. And it is in this book that we find emphatic testimony that death is a return, being told that at death the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Passages such as these positively refute many ideas that are commonly held in regard to these things. The orthodox conception of death is that the word has one meaning when applied to animals, but an entirely different meaning when applied to man. Ecclesiastes refutes this idea by the declaration that the same event happens to both man and animals. The commonly held idea that the dead know everything is flatly contradicted by the statement that the dead know not anything. The commonly held belief that sheol is a place of activity, conversations and knowledge is set aside by the statement that these things are not found in sheol.

Of course it is plain to see that if the testimony of such verses as these were received, it would sound the death knell of the whole orthodox idea concerning death, and man's state between death and resurrection. This creates a demand that something must be done to set aside such clear and positive testimony. Ways must be found to devitalize and nullify the message of this book. That this has been accomplished is soon discovered by every teacher who tries to set forth the scriptural testimony in regard to man's nature. When Ecclesiastes is called into the witness box to offer its testimony, he finds that its character has been impeached, its integrity discredited and its credibility open to question.

However, in discrediting this book, the orthodox have not dared to follow the course of some who declare that this book is not the Word of God and has no place in the canon of Scripture. They have hardly dared to deny its inspiration, but more subtle ways have been found to nullify the strong testimony of this book.

There is one group of evangelical theologians who, while they insist that the book is inspired, insist that it is merely the inspired account of a man's reasonings about life and death. This position is set forth in the introduction to Ecclesiastes found in the *Scofield Reference Bible*.

This is the book of man "under the sun," reasoning about life; It is the best man can do, with the knowledge that there is a holy God, and that He will bring everything into judgment. The key phrases are "under the sun"; "I perceived"; "I said in my heart." Inspiration sets down accurately what passes, but the conclusions and reasons are, after all, man's. *Scofield Reference Bible*, page 696.

In a note on Ecclesiastes 9:10 we find the following.

Verse ten is no more a divine revelation concerning the state of the dead than any other conclusion of "the Preacher" (Eccl. 1:1) is such a revelation. Reasoning from the standpoint of man "under the sun," the natural man can see no difference between a dead man. and a dead lion (v. 4). A living dog is better than either. No one would quote verse 2 as a divine revelation. These reasonings of man *apart* from divine revelation are set down by inspiration just as the words of Satan (Gen. 3:4; Job 2:4, 5, etc.) are so set down.

I recognize that it is unfair in controversy to state in our own words the tenets of those with whom we differ. Nevertheless, if words have any meaning, no other meaning can be found in the two statements quoted above than that Ecclesiastes is the inspired account of man's fallible reasoning, and that its trustworthiness can no more be depended upon than the words of Satan. I repudiate this

conception of Ecclesiastes with all my heart, believing that it is a divine revelation from beginning to end. The statement, "No one would quote verse 2 as a divine revelation," takes in too much territory. I regularly quote this as a divine revelation.

Every careful student of the Word recognizes the important difference. between inspiration and revelation. The Bible contains an inspired record of what men said and did, but it does not follow that all they said or did was inspired. It is true that in Genesis 3:4 we find the inspired record of the lie Satan told to Eve; and in Job 2:4 we have the inspired account of the slander that he spoke against Job. This same principle applies to many statements in the Bible, yet it is inconceivable and unthinkable that this could apply to a whole book. Furthermore, such an idea is flatly contradicted by the testimony which the Spirit of God gives to the book of Ecclesiastes.

**"And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." Ecclesiastes 12:9-10.**

To me, this settles the matter beyond all dispute. These words are the inspired record of the character of this book. We can depend upon it, the words it contains are upright, they are words of truth.

## **Under The Sun**

There is a second group of evangelical theologians who would also set aside the witness of this book, but these do not accept the theory of the first group that it is an inspired record of man's confused thinking. This second group finds some magic in the words "under the sun" which make void all testimony given by this book. They admit that the testimony of this book is true, but insist that it is only true "under the sun." Here is the way one writer puts it:

"Certainly this book is perfectly and divinely inspired, but not to teach heavenly realities but the things under the sun phenomenally, i.e. as they appear to the wise King."

. The phrase "under the sun" means *upon the earth*. This *is all* that it means. In verse 3 of chapter 1, the writer asks what profit a man has out of all his labor which he does upon the earth (under the sun). In 1:9 he states that there is nothing new upon the earth. In 1:14 he tells how he had witnessed all the works done upon the earth. He confesses in 2:18 that he hated the labor he had done upon the earth because he would leave it to someone else when he died. He had been wise upon the earth (2:19), but he did not know that his heir would be the same. This caused him to despair of the results of his labors upon the earth (2:20), and caused him to repeat his original question concerning what a man profited from all his labors upon the earth (2:22).

I readily admit my inability to see just how this phrase makes void or alters the meaning of a single word spoken in the first two chapters.

In 3:16 he states that he saw under the sun the place of judgment, and wickedness was there. He looked in the place of righteousness and found iniquity. Human experience proves the truth of this. He saw the oppressions that are done under the sun (upon the earth), saw vanity upon the earth, and considered all the living which walk upon the earth (4:1, 7, 15). In 5:13 he speaks of a sore evil he had seen upon the earth, and concluded that man should enjoy the good of the labor he performs under the sun. He asks who can tell a man what shall be after him upon the earth (6:12). Few people have noticed that Solomon alters this phrase now and then. In 3:1 it is "under the heaven." In 8:14 it is "upon the earth." But whether "under the sun," "upon the earth," or "under the heaven" the meaning is identical. At no time does it ever alter in the least the truth of the statements that are being made. .

The student can examine every occurrence of the phrase "under the sun" for himself. He will need no concordance in order to do this. It can best be done by reading the entire book. By so doing he will discover the real force of this oft-recurring phrase, and he will come to the end of the book with the conviction that "under the sun" is not a mysterious phrase which makes void every truth declared in this portion of God's Word.

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## **THE INTERMEDIATE STATE**

**By J. H. Pettengell, D. D.**

Editor's Note: The following article was written in 1882 by J. H. Pettengell, D. D. ( Not to be confused with William L. Pettingill) It appeared in a magazine that was published in London, England, at that time. About five years ago, it came into my hands and its force and clarity proved to be a real help to me. I know nothing of the author, but would like to have information concerning him. He wrote many other articles and books, but I have tried in vain to locate these. Maybe some reader can help me in regard to this. The author was a resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, when this was written. All footnotes in the article are mine. O. Q. S.

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Among the advocates of the doctrine of eternal life only in Christ, there is considerable diversity of sentiment on many minor questions, more or less intimately connected with the main question. A perfect agreement upon all points of doctrine among independent thinkers could hardly be expected; and perhaps in our present state of imperfect knowledge, is hardly to be desired. But while this diversity of views, upon what may be called "minor points," shows that their decision is not essential to the main question, and that a valid argument may be made in support of it independent of these other questions; yet, if we were united on some of these more important and collateral questions that are intimately connected with our common doctrine, we would present a better front to our adversaries, and meet more successfully their most plausible arguments. I refer more especially to those questions that relate to the nature of man, and the intermediate state. It has long seemed to be that those of my respected fellow-advocates of this great Gospel-doctrine of immortality only through Christ, who still hold that the soul of man is an immaterial substance residing within the body, yet independent of it in the fulfillment of its legitimate functions, and, consequently, that the intermediate state between death and resurrection, is a state of consciousness and activity, and probably, a state of second probation for a portion, if not for the whole human race, concede to their Platonic adversaries their strongest position, and indeed the main postulate upon which they build their argument for the natural immortality of the soul, and unnecessarily hamper themselves in the conduct of their argument. Indeed they seem to be led away insidiously by the sophistry of their adversaries from the discussion of the real essential question, the immortality of MAN, to the discussion of a hypothetical question concerning the soul of man, which neither science nor philosophy is able to fathom.

May I be permitted to offer, through the medium of this valuable Magazine, some reasons for the consideration of my Christian brethren in Europe why I cannot agree with them in holding the intermediate state to be one of consciousness and activity; and especially, why I cannot believe it to afford any mortal man an opportunity of laying hold of salvation that is offered through Christ in the Gospel to sinners in this life.

1. It assumes, as I have already intimated, the chief postulate of the Platonic philosophy; the independent initiative existence of the human soul. This is the real battle-ground of the whole question, so far as philosophy and science are concerned, It opens a question concerning the nature of man which neither of them, apart from revelation, has ever been able to settle; and which even revelation does not undertake to settle for us; certainly not, as I think, in favour of the Platonic theory.

So far as science has anything to say on the question, especially modern science, its testimony is all on the side of the complete solidarity of man, and of the entire unconsciousness of the whole individual in death; while on the other hand, if the philosophical claim be admitted, which is purely one of sentiment and human conceit, a wide door is opened, not only for all the worst errors of the Romish Church - such as that of purgatory, invocation of saints, as well as the doctrine of a future probation, and even of universal restoration - but also a very plausible argument in behalf of Plato's dogma of the natural and necessary immortality of the soul, which has engendered and fostered all these other notions. They all stand together, as it seems to me, having one common root, and they all must fall together when severed from that.

2. This doctrine assumes that man is a double personality: that he can be dead and alive at the same time; which is not only contrary to reason, but to the uniform teaching of God's Word. It is not necessary for us to know of how many parts man is composed, nor what these parts are; but it is necessary for us to regard man as a complete unity or solidarity. The personality resides, not in one of these parts, but in the whole; or we are led into inextricable confusion on this whole question. This is just the predicament of our adversaries. If the personality, or the real responsible man, resides in one of these parts and not in both united, then man is not dead when the irresponsible part is cast off, and it is a delusion and a falsehood to call this change that comes upon him, "Death." In fact, there is no death at all; for the body of flesh, considered by itself, is not a living thing. It is the whole person that lives, and the whole person that dies, or, there is no death of the person. If the real, responsible person only escapes from his imprisonment when this change, called death, takes place, then we have good reason to conclude that it is actually deathless in its very nature; and that, though it may be again incarnated in the resurrection, the second death - which must indeed be like the first in its nature, or there is no analogy - will only again release it, or will, at any rate, fail to put an end to its personal conscious existence. It may be said that God is able to destroy the soul as well as the body in the second death. This cannot be denied; but, if the soul has such a *vis vitae*(vital force) of its own, its destruction would seem to be possible only by a positive act of *annihilation*; and this term, to which we object, as granting the assumption to which we object, would seem to have our sanction. And besides this, we are adroitly led away from the discussion of the real question in issue, the immortality of *man*, to a metaphysical discussion concerning the *nature* of man, and especially, the nature of the *soul*.

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