

**The Word of Truth Ministry Presents
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#SS31**

FIFTY QUESTIONS ANSWERED

After Death, What?

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[**PREFACE** : In the 1940's era, many differences between traditional church theology and the words of the Bible were openly addressed head-on by Mr. Sellers in his written and (then) radio ministry. Although it is hard to find such open discussions of such great divergence today, particularly in the subjects of Man's Nature and his Destiny (a prior message), the fact is that differences still exist, and this/these booklets are still of value to those earnestly seeking their own understanding, not just what's been told to them by someone with a church title... We hope that this message falls on the "good soil", and stimulates your desire to seek understanding, as it has many others..]

My greatest desire for the people of God is that they shall be interested in the Word of God. I am willing to use every means at my disposal to create and encourage such interest. All growth in grace and knowledge is dependent upon a genuine personal concern to understand what God means by the things He has said in His Word. So widespread is the interest of God's people in nonscriptural subjects, that even the least interest shown in scriptural subjects is cause for rejoicing. At present there is a real concern being manifested among Christian people everywhere in regard to all subjects that are related to the nature of man and the destiny of man. The present generation of ministers seem to be doing all they can to kill this interest. Nevertheless, it persists in spite of all attempts made to stifle it. The perplexity that has existed in the past has brought about a state of agitation, and this in turn has caused the great problems related to man's nature and destiny to come to the front and demand consideration. In spite of this those who are supposed to minister the Word of God are remaining silent, or else manifesting definite antagonism toward the consideration of these things.

The complete silence of the majority of ministers upon these topics is appalling. They refuse to discuss with their hearers the things they most desire and need to know. The uncharitable epithets of "trouble-maker" and "heretic" are hurled at all who do study and discuss these subjects. The present silence of the ministry upon these themes is well attested to by a champion of the orthodox viewpoint.

"Since that eighth of July, 1741, when Edwards preached his tremendous sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked has gradually gone into obscurity until now its eclipse is almost total. To be sure, it survives in the creeds of the Church. But in actuality it is little preached and less taught, a fact which applies largely to the evangelicals, as well as modernists of our day. If anyone doubts this, he has only to do as the writer has done, and ask a representative group of Christian young people when they heard a sermon on everlasting punishment. The answer will be surprising in its revelation of the silence enveloping this solemn theme. That there is a hell, and that all who reject Christ will go there, is a Bible doctrine either ignored or else left to inference in many a church where the full gospel is otherwise preached, but where hell is mentioned only in the recitation of the Apostle's Creed. (Frank E. Gaebelien, Litt.D. in *Moody Monthly*, February, 1942.)

The great advances made in Bible study during the past century have not been allowed to shed their light upon these questions. Past and present leaders of Biblical thought have not permitted these subjects to be restudied, revised or restated in the light of many things now generally known concerning the Word of God, things that were unknown or hidden a hundred years ago. To all present leaders the ideas of restudy and revision are suggestive of the rejection of the Bible, and are looked upon as being a wandering into heresy. If the people refuse to receive without question a certain creedal conception of man's nature and destiny, they are berated for refusing to accept the Word of God. While in many sermons they are encouraged to study the Bible, yet they are damned as heretics if they determine to study what it says about the nature and destiny of man. The only study that is permissible is that which is for the purpose of confirming some foregone conclusion. Present leaders demand that the orthodox view be accepted without study, consideration or question. On these subjects no one can ever advance in knowledge and no one is ever expected to, for they are not considered as subjects to be studied. They are regarded as things to be blindly accepted.

When a doctrine has long and generally been accepted, any insistence upon its reinvestigation excites great anger in the minds of many people. When the investigating work begins and results of the labor are set forth, the anger turns into hatred and bitterness. This has to be borne with. It is the inevitable consequence that follows when light is presented to eyes that are unaccustomed to it. In this stage, if people perceive at all what is set before them it is almost always in exaggerated and distorted forms. They are like the blind man who upon receiving his sight saw "men as trees walking." This causes them to be prejudiced against whole bodies of truth about which they know very little.

It should always be kept in mind that God's revelation of the great truths related to man's nature and destiny is one thing, while man's understanding of these truths is quite another. God's truths are as unchangeable as He is, but man's understanding of these truths is incomplete, imperfect and defective. Man's understanding of God's revelation must always be subject to revision and readjustment as knowledge of Biblical facts is gained.

A Revival of Interest

In the history of Christendom there have been many genuine revivals. These could more properly be called revolutions, for that is exactly what they were. Shortly after the middle of the nineteenth century the beginning of a definite revival of interest in the Word of God took place, which in time became a revolution indeed. For many years the people had been wandering around in a desert, until their thirst for some fresh water from the living fountain of truth became so acute that they turned from those leaders whose one purpose in life seemed to be to keep certain dogmas and doctrines intact and immovable. This revival of Bible study centered in what is commonly called dispensational truth, and outstanding among the truths developed from the Word was that of the premillennial second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The climax of this revival was reached shortly after the close of the first world war, and since then satisfaction with the few truths recovered, apathy and indifference has characterized the mass of people who confess the inerrancy of the Bible as the Word of God.

However, before the force of this revival of interest in the Word of God was spent, it resulted in the establishing and development of many great churches, all the major Bible Institutes, the Bible Conference movement, the fundamentalist movement in many denominations, also such monumental works as the *Scofield Reference Bible*, and numerous Bible study magazines, a few of which are still published today.

The numerous things which grew out of this revival are now in the hands of men who resist all further changes, denounce every attempt to uncover more truth, and who have caused the people to settle down in what can only be called a barren desert. They believe that finality of truth has been reached upon every subject, and Scripture is regarded by them as a "vast arsenal of text weapons" to be used in defense of their positions.

They deny that any further investigation is necessary, and they commit everyone of their followers to certain theories in such a way as to make impartial study and research impossible.

However, once again the people are crying for fresh and pure water from the living fountain of God's Word. This deep desire has led to what is unmistakably the beginning of a new revival of interest in the Word of God. This time the interest is centering in the two great themes already referred to - the nature of man and the destiny of man. Thousands of people have realized that there is no satisfying or abiding truth in the old creedal theology commonly declared in regard to these subjects. They are now longing for something fresh, definite and accurate from the sacred Scriptures upon such subjects as the soul, the human spirit, the meaning of death, the state of men between death and resurrection, the meaning and purpose of resurrection, the nature and duration of future punishment, the meaning of such words as **sheol, hades, gehenna**, destruction and perish; they desire to know the nature and meaning of the second death and the lake of fire. They are not turning from the Word, they are asking that those who profess to teach the Word shall take them into the Word in regard to these subjects.

It has become my conviction that it is now the duty of every sincere Bible student and teacher to turn to the Word and discover anew what God has revealed there for our learning. However, it is of no profit if men turn to the Word to find support for some view that they feel must be maintained. And this is not the time for any man or any set of men to claim that they have the truth or have reached finality of truth in regard to these subjects.

Many are now speaking with finality upon these subjects who give no evidence whatsoever that they have personally gone to the Scriptures and done the work that is imperative before anybody has a right to claim that he possesses the least grain of truth. It is evident that many are studying the Bible from without rather than from within in connection with man's nature and destiny.

The next twenty-five years could well be spent by all students of the Word in pursuit of a true, accurate and complete understanding of God's great revelation upon these matters. There is no hurry about coming to any definite conclusions, and in this free country no one can force us to even express an opinion upon these subjects. Conclusions should be formed and positions taken only when research and investigation is complete. If such labors should be carried on for twenty-five years, the next generation would have much truth for their portion as a heritage from us, and the million-and-one difficulties which have surrounded these subjects would, for the greater part, be cleared away.

However, being a realist and fully cognizant of the manner in which the study of these subjects has long been conducted, I see no hope at present in regard to the present generation of ministers becoming students of these subjects.

Nevertheless, in the matter of faithfulness the few must not wait upon the majority to act. Therefore, let all who have a mind to work determine that while God gives us breath, to use our time in the work of uncovering and recovering the truth of God. Let us remember that we are not erecting some new set of dogmas to defend, that we are not forming an organization or some new set of doctrines, neither are we seeking to find some popular teaching which the majority of superficial men will accept. Our task is study, consideration, and meditation. The progress must be slow. Each advance calls for a complete rest while the truth is assimilated and truly related to Him who is the Truth. The work is sure to be well pleasing to God, and He will reward the laborers with a true understanding of His truth.

The Fifty Questions

The questions which are answered in this treatise are the substance of a pamphlet by H. A. Ironside, Litt.D., well known writer of many books, and pastor of the *Moody Memorial Church* of Chicago. The title of his pamphlet is **AFTER DEATH, WHAT?** The subtitle is, *Fifty questions for the consideration of those who deny the everlasting and conscious punishment of the finally lost, and the consciousness of all while in the disembodied state.*

Mr. Ironside's pamphlet is made up entirely of these fifty questions. These will be faithfully and fully reproduced even to the emphasis, so that all who read these answers will have his questions before them in the exact wording in which they were asked.

It is plain that Mr. Ironside has asked these questions in complete assurance that they cannot be answered. Some will conclude that I am disrespectful and uncharitable even to attempt it. Many, who find confirmation for their position in such questions as these, will not want these questions answered, therefore, my answers will not be acceptable to them. However, since these questions have been asked, and widely circulated, I desire to remove these barriers which may stand in the way of some entering into the work of uncovering and recovering the truth. And as it affords an opportunity to set forth much truth against a background of error, I shall attempt to answer these questions in harmony with the principles set forth in **1 Peter 3 :15. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."** To me the word *meekness* does not mean to be tamely submissive, spiritless, or easily cowed. It means mildness and evenness of temper and emotions. The word *fear* does not denote cowardice, it means reverence. I shall diligently strive to manifest these graces in answering these questions.

The Title

No part of a writer's pamphlet is given more careful consideration than the title, therefore, it may be well to give some consideration to both the title and subtitle under which these questions appear. In regard to the title, **After Death, What?**, there is a familiar passage of Scripture which provides an answer to this. If the truth of this verse were more generally accepted and believed, many of these fifty questions would never have been asked and few would need to be answered.

**"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
Hebrews 9:27.**

It is commonly held that men at death either wing their way to heaven or descend into hell. If this is true, then the passage just quoted would need to be revised to make it say that after death comes either heaven or hell. But we cannot alter Scripture, so men may need to alter their beliefs.

The period in which a man is in the state of death is never by God reckoned as any part of his life, history or experiences. Death is an interval in which man knows nothing and during which nothing happens. Psalm 6 :5, Psalm 30 :9. The next thing that **most** men will know after death is resurrection unto judgment at the great white throne. The fact of death and judgment are great general truths, and there are special groups who will never see death and others who will not come into judgment. In spite of these exemptions from the general rule concerning death and judgment, the message of Hebrews 9 :27 is true - **it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.** The orthodox idea makes the order after death for the wicked dead to be hell, resurrection; judgment, then hell again. The scriptural idea seems to be death, resurrection, judgment, then the lake of fire.

In the subtitle Mr. Ironside uses the word *everlasting* in place of the familiar and commonly used word *eternal*. It is probably not done so by Mr. Ironside, but many make a distinction between the word *eternal* and *everlasting* in order to escape a dilemma.

The word *eternal*, when used of duration, strictly implies absence of either beginning or end. In view of this there can be no such thing as "eternal punishment," since all punishment will certainly have a beginning. The word *everlasting* applies to future duration alone, and this explains why many men use it in speaking of punishment. However, this leaves them still in a quandry since there is no Greek word in the New Testament that stands for everlasting. In places such as Matthew 25:46 the words everlasting and eternal are the same Greek word. Men may rashly insist that since the adjective *eternal* is used of God as well as of punishment they must mean the same thing, nevertheless, it is hard for sober students to believe that wicked men will endure and be punished as long as God Himself endures.

It is also to be noted that in the subtitle Mr. Ironside uses the word *punishment* instead of the commonly used *torment*. This makes the teaching much more acceptable to that group of people who find it impossible to believe that God will ever torment anyone. Mr. Ironside himself has emphatically stated many times that he does not believe God will ever torment anyone. This may be the reason for his use of the word *punishment*.

He speaks of the "disembodied state." These familiar words are constantly used by many people who would hesitate before they used them again if they would just stop to examine them carefully. The only record of anybody being disembodied in Scripture is where demons or evil spirits had entered into men and were cast out. These were disembodied, but there is no other record. This statement is made in full knowledge of 2 Cor. 12 :1-3.

Now that the ground has been cleared by these preliminary remarks, I will take up the fifty questions one by one.

Question Number One

What did our Lord mean when He said not to fear those "who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do," if the loss of the soul is the same as physical death?

One outstanding characteristic of most literature that goes forth as Biblical exposition or apologetics is that the writers never bother to define the terms which they constantly use. Here we have "loss of the soul" and "physical death," but no way of discovering what Mr. Ironside means when he uses the words *soul* and *death*, or what thought he intends to convey by the term "loss of the soul" or "physical death." To me this is a serious fault, and since I desire to avoid all ambiguity in these answers, I will carefully define all terms used in this pamphlet. To some who read these lines, these definitions may at first appear to be an evading of the question, but it will be discovered that this is not the purpose.

I do not believe that death, the death that comes upon all men because of Adam's sin, is the loss of the soul. It is my understanding that Scripture emphatically teaches that death is a *return*. At Adam's death the work of creation which God had performed for him went into reverse. He had not been created out of nothing, for he was made of the dust of the earth. After God made Adam of the dust of the earth, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, **and he became a living soul**. This is man's creation, and if the process is reversed you will have man's death. If the breath of life (also called spirit) returns to God who gave it, and the soil (dust) returns to the earth as it was, it is the death of man. This is the emphatic testimony of Genesis 2:7 and Genesis 3 :19.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7.

"In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and unto dust you will return." Genesis 3:19.

The same truth is set forth in **Ecclesiastes 12 :7**, where, after four things are mentioned which symbolize death, it says:

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it."

Those who believe that death is a return certainly have their feet upon the solid ground of Scripture. **At death no part of man or the man as a whole enters into any new or unknown condition. The man was soil before his creation, and unto the soil he returns. The spirit (breath of life) was with God before it was ever given to man, and at death it returns to God who gave it.**

If there is no resurrection of the dead, death would be the end of man, it would be the loss of all he ever was as a living soul, it would be his destruction. This is the emphatic teaching of Paul in **1 Corinthians 15 :12-18. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.** However, with Paul, I believe there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust (Acts 24 :15); also the words of our Lord in **John 5 :28-29:**

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

The very fact of resurrection tells us plainly that death is not man's end. It is not his destruction. It is only temporary. My history as a living soul will come to an end in death, but it will begin again at resurrection. No page will be added to it, no matter how many years I spend in the state of death. This is my conviction, and it is a conviction that has come from constant application of my mind to the Word of God. And if anyone should object that there is no comfort in such a belief, I can only answer that I do not go to the Word to find pleasant beliefs or comfortable convictions. I go there to find the truth, and have no desire to be numbered among those whose only aim in opening the Word of God is to revel in some sweet sensation.

Having set forth my understanding of what the Bible teaches in regard to the nature and meaning of death, I will now state what I believe our Lord meant when He spoke of those "who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." We will need to have before us the entire passage.

"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell (gehenna); yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." Luke 12:4-5.

The parallel passage is found in **Matthew 10 :28.**

"And fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (gehenna)."

Years ago I became convinced that the chief interest in these two passages among many professing Christians was in regard to what they could be used to prove or to disprove. Therefore heavy emphasis was always placed upon the first part of these verses, while the last part about "destroy both soul and body" was practically ignored. I care not what can be proved or disproved by these verses. What God intended they should teach us is of paramount importance.

Any honest consideration of what these verses teach must be in full recognition that the faithful student will approach these New Testament passages with a mind that is saturated with the Old. The merest tyro of a student can discover for himself that the Hebrew for soul is *nephesh*, and that this, in the Scriptures, is identical with the Greek word *psuche*. Knowing these things he will quickly discover that the Word of God often speaks of men killing the soul. See Numbers 31 :19, 35 :11, 15, 30, Deuteronomy 27:25, Joshua 11:11,20:3,9. The word *nephesh* appears in every One of these passages, and each passage speaks of a *nephesh* or 'Soul being killed. Therefore, no student possessing this knowledge can feel assured that he has the truth in these New Testament passages until his understanding is in harmony with the Old Testament revelation. The problem resolves itself into the apparent conflict between numerous Old Testament passages which speak of men "killing the soul" and the New Testament passage which states that men are not able to kill the soul.

These apparently conflicting statements harmonize immediately when we recognize that in Matthew 10 :28 and Luke 12 :4-5, there is no reference to murder or manslaughter. The word *kill* does not refer to either one of these in the passages under consideration. This is demonstrated by the fact that Luke 12:5 speaks of. God killing, and God never murders anybody. The Greek word used here and the context signify that the word *kill* means to bring to an end by judicial decree. The courts of this world can do this insofar as the bodily aspect of man is concerned. They cannot do it to man as a soul. But God can do this, for He is able to destroy man as a body and man as a soul in gehenna. No human court can settle a man's destiny. God alone can do this.

Question Number Two

A soul which cannot be killed with the body, is it not immortal?

Positively not! A soul that can be destroyed is not immortal. This is building a doctrine upon an inference in complete disregard of Paul's statement to Timothy that the Lord Jesus is the only one who has immortality (1 Tim. 6 :16).

Question Number Three

Have you noticed that Scripture uses the terms "mortal," "mortality," and "immortality" in relation to the body? (See Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53.)

Having spent much time in the study of these words, I have noticed this and much more. I know that Scripture never speaks of an immortal soul, neither does it speak of a mortal soul. As stated before, it does say that the Lord Jesus is the only one who has immortality. This passage (1 Tim. 6 :16) to me puts the question of immortality beyond all debate. It is impossible for me to attribute to all men that which the Scripture attributes only to Jesus Christ.

For many centuries Christendom has been getting the doctrine of man's natural immortality from Greek philosophy, then proving it by inferences drawn from the Word of God. This places all who hold this doctrine in the ridiculous position of proving a doctrine by the Word when the doctrine itself cannot be found in the Word. A clear example of this is seen in the writings of J. N. Darby. In *The Hopes of the Church*, published in 1841, Mr. Darby made the following statement:

"We would express our conviction that the idea of *the immortality of the soul* has no source in the gospel; that it comes, on the contrary from the Platonists and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the church, or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of resurrection. This was about the time of Origen. It is hardly needful to say that we do not doubt the immortality of the soul; we mark the fact only that this view has taken the place of the doctrine of the resurrection of the church, as the epoch of its joy and glory."

I doubt if a more pertinent example of the blinding and binding power of tradition can be produced than this. Here is one who said of "the idea of the immortality of the soul" that it has no source in the gospel, that it came from the followers of Plato, that it came in to replace the doctrine of resurrection at the time when the coming of Christ was lost sight of, yet, he insisted, *we do not doubt it*.

Question Number Four

If a spirit cannot live without a body, how do you account for the existence of God, who "is a Spirit?" (John 4:24.)

A spirit CAN live without a body. In fact, if it had a body, it would not be a spirit. This is clearly demonstrated by the words of our Lord to His disciples:

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Luke 24:39.

By these words our Lord denied that He was a spirit being, and He also set forth the true character of all spirit beings. They do not have flesh and bones. These words should be sufficient to force everyone to do more accurate thinking upon the subject of spirits.

In the Bible we find three great classes of created being set forth clearly and unmistakably. These are spirit beings, angelic beings and human beings; called spirits, angels and men. We find our place in only one of these classes. And, in view of the awful confusion and ignorance that prevails, it is necessary to state emphatically that we are neither angelic beings nor spirit beings. We are human beings - the highest order of all created beings.

Many people ignorantly believe that death will transform them into angels, and others believe that it will cause them to become spirit beings. This is foreign to the Word of God, yet people persist in such beliefs. I am convinced that the whole burden of divine revelation teaches that what we are in life we will also be in death and in resurrection - human beings. I never expect to be an angel or spirit. I never want to be an angel or spirit. In God's order of creation, I am a man, a human being, and that is what I will always be. A human being is not a spirit being.

There is no such thing known to Scripture as a "disembodied spirit." There are evil spirits which have sought embodiment in human beings, and have accomplished their foul purpose. When our Lord met up with these wicked spirits, He cast them out. Or, we may accurately say, He disembodied them. This is the nearest thing to a "disembodied spirit" that can be found in the Bible.

All the confusion that exists in regard to this subject can be traced to the practice of making the spirit of man, that is, the human spirit, to be a spirit being. Man's spirit is not a distinct entity or a separate personality that is possessing his body for a time.

It is my understanding, resulting from careful study, that there is a class of beings called spirits, and these have no bodily aspect. Some of these beings have fallen through sin, and these have entered into men and controlled them by overwhelming the human spirit.

However, God forbid that I should try to discover the character and nature of the human spirit by likening it to any spirit being, whether fallen or unfallen. The human spirit is the result of that life from God which makes us living souls. It is not a spirit being, it has no separate personality. At man's death it goes back to God who gave it. When it returns to Him, it will be just as it was before it came to us.

However, it must always be kept in mind that the word *spirit* has numerous meanings. I heartily agree with Mr. Ironside in his statement:

"However, it is well for us to remember that even in English the word "spirit" has a number of meanings, according to the connection in which it is used, and these meanings cannot be confounded without doing violence to the language."
Quoted from *Death and Afterwards*, page 40.

And now to return to the question - I readily admit that spirits can live without a body. If they have bodies, then they are not spirits.

Question Number Five

What of the angels, who are called "spirits?" (Heb. 1:7,14.)

Those who read the two passages cited in this question will discover at once that "spirit" is an aspect of the angels, just as "flame of fire" is an aspect of His ministers. God is spirit, men are spirits and angels are spirits. This does not express nature, but it does set forth an aspect that is common to all these beings. The One we call the Father is of the Godhead. He is God, not a man, not an angel, not a spirit. If He were a man, He would not be God, and if He were a spirit He would not be God. John 4:24 should read, "God is spirit." It is as erroneous to insert the indefinite article (a) here as it would be to insert it in 1 John 4 :8, and make it read "God is a love." The words "God is spirit," expresses one aspect of His being, an aspect that is common also to human beings, angelic beings and spirit beings. Yes, even spirit beings have the aspect of spirit.

The gulf between God and His creatures would be too great if it were not for the fact that one aspect is common to both of them. This is *spirit*. The Son takes the things of God, who is spirit, and reveals them to us who are spirits. The basis of all understanding between God and man is based upon the fact that He is spirit and that man is spirit. If this were better understood it would result in a glorious increase of true fellowship and worship. God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit. Man's spirit is the very seat of his intelligence. It is as a spirit man knows, it is as a spirit he reasons, it is as a spirit he receives instruction from God. Space forbids me dealing with the impartation of life to our spirits by the Word. This is the great miracle that transforms sinners

Question Number Six

How do you account for the prolonged existence of demons, who are wicked and lost spirits? (Luke 8:27-29; Mark 1:23-26.)

We do not need to account for their prolonged existence. They are not subject to death, and they will exist until they are destroyed in that day when they are judged by God.

Question Number Seven

What of the angels that sinned, who are reserved under chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day? (Jude 6.)

When death passed upon all men, it did not pass upon the angels. Angels are not subject to death. In Adam, all die, but angels are not "in Adam." Therefore, the angels who have sinned are reserved in chains until the day of judgment. Man goes into the state of death, and will experience resurrection. Sin among angels leads to imprisonment. Sin among men leads to death. Angels will be taken out of their prison to be judged. Man will be raised from the dead to be judged.

Question Number Eight

How could the people of Sodom and Gomorrah be suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, if they were annihilated, or totally unconscious, when destroyed by material fire? (Jude 7.)

It appears to me that Jude 7 speaks of "cities" rather than people. These cities are still examples of God's destroying judgment, and will remain such until the close of this eon. However, let us admit that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah have been suffering the vengeance of eternal fire ever since the day of their death by material fire. In question number seventeen, Mr. Ironside refers to it being more tolerable for the people of Sodom in the day of judgment than for the people of Capernaum. The dilemma is of his own creation. In this question he has the people of Sodom already suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, while in the seventeenth question he has it being more tolerable for the people of Sodom in the day of judgment. Are the people of Sodom to be taken out of the "eternal fire" and placed in one that is easier to bear after the judgment?

It seems to me that an honest translation of Jude 7 is of immeasurable help in understanding its message.

"As Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, in like manner to these giving themselves over to fornication, and going after other flesh, are lying before us as an example, experiencing the penalty of eonian fire."

Question Number Nine

When the Lord told the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," (Luke 23:43) did he mean that he should be fast asleep and know nothing?

If our Lord had meant this, He would have said it. He was not speaking of sleep or consciousness. He was answering the request of this malefactor that He would remember him when He came into His kingdom. Most people, in their blissful ignorance, are able to look upon the Lord's answer as a little island in Scripture, completely separated from and having no connection with anything our Lord said in other places in regard to these things. Certain great truths of Scripture come automatically to *my* mind when I read these words. They are these.

1. The Lord Jesus said that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so also He would be the same length of time in the heart of the earth (**Matt. 12 :40**). It is my understanding that these words were fulfilled in between the time of His death and His resurrection, therefore, I believe that He was in the heart of the earth for three days and nights after His death.

2. After His resurrection He forbid Mary to touch Him, saying that He had not yet ascended to His Father. **John 20 :17**.

3. The positive statements made *by* Paul in **2 Corinthians 12 :2-4** definitely locate Paradise as being in the third heaven. Paradise cannot be moved around just to make it fit some teaching.

4. Therefore, if He were in the heart of the earth for three days after His death, He was not in Paradise on the day of His death. What then did He mean when He said to the malefactor "**Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise?**"

These four pertinent facts are plain, and they demand that the true student should seek diligently for the meaning of these words. Men care little for their true meaning, satisfied that they have exhausted their value when they use them to prove that at death man goes at once to Paradise. If these words mean that the thief was to be in Paradise with the Lord on the day they were spoken, we are faced with insurmountable difficulties as set forth in the preceding paragraphs.

Many will be inclined to cry out, "But, how can these words have any other meaning?"

I answer this *by* saying that in the *King James Version* the position of the comma is such that these words can have no other meaning. Nevertheless, **since there are no commas in the original Greek**, we have every right to eliminate it. No stroke of the pen of some translator can ever be permitted *to* bar our way *to* the truth of God. When one becomes familiar with the Old Testament he will recognize at once that the words "to day" and "**this day**" are a Hebraism used on all occasions when the matter stated was solemn and important.

"Know therefore this day, and consider in thine heart." Deu. 4:39.

"Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments which I command thee this day" Deu. 4:40.

"And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." Deu. 6:6.

"Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day." Deu. 7 :11.

"All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do." Deu. 8:1.

"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes which I command thee this day." Deu. 8:11.

"I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish." Deu. 8:19.

"Which I command thee this day." Deu. 10:13.

"And know ye this day." Deu. 11 :2.

"Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day." Deu. 11 :8.

"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day." Deu. 11 :13.

"Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse." Deu.11:26

"Which I command you this day." Deu. 11:27.

"And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day." Deu. 11 :32.

"Therefore I command thee this thing today." Deu. 15:15.

"Wherefore I take you to record this day." Acts 20:26.

"I shall answer for myself this day." Acts 26:2.

It is vain *for* men to argue that our Lord would not have said "Verily, I say unto *you today*" referring to the day on which the words were spoken. The same idiom is found too many times in the inspired Old Testament *for* anyone to say that our Lord would have been using "a vain and foolish platitude" as a recent writer has declared. This idiom has its parallel in almost every language. The familiar, "I am telling *you* right now," is the same type of idiom.

Let us remember that on the blackest day the universe has ever known, one man had enough faith on that day to make a request in regard to the future. On that black day, the darkest the world ever knew, our Lord said:

"Verily, I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise."

Question Number Ten

How could Abraham, Isaac and Jacob be said to "live unto Him," thousands of years after they had died, if death and extinction of being are synonymous? (Luke 20:38.)

I sometimes marvel at the ruthless way in which these words are separated *from* their context. They were spoken to the Pharisees who denied resurrection. In Mark 12 :26 and Luke 20 :37 we discover what our Lord intended to prove by bringing in the lesson of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He intended to prove that "the dead are raised," whereas men have him proving that the dead are alive. Since it is "the dead" that are raised, then if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are now alive, they will not need to be raised from the dead. The argument of our Lord in this place demands that they be dead, therefore, resurrection is a necessity or God will be the God of the dead. Since He is not, resurrection is demanded.

Our Lord said to the Jews, "**Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead.**" John 6 :49. How could he say this if they were alive? Peter said, "**David is both dead and buried and His sepulchre is with us unto this day.**" Acts 2 :29. How could he make this emphatic statement if David were alive?

"But," some will object, "it says that all live unto Him."

This difficulty comes from making words mean what we please. The word "live" does not necessarily mean to be alive. It very definitely means *to continue in the memory*. For example, the child who has died *lives* in the memory of the mother. Since the very hairs of our heads are numbered (not counted) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob live in the memory of God.

Question Number Eleven

Do you not think all who heard the Lord Jesus relate the story of the rich man and Lazarus, would naturally suppose He meant to teach conscious existence after death in happiness or woe? (Luke 16:19-31.)

It is hard to say just what the blind and covetous Pharisees would have "naturally supposed" when they heard these words.

If this record is read apart from its context, one could "naturally suppose" that there is evil in riches and virtue in poverty, that at death angels come and carry men to Abraham's bosom, that Abraham holds some exalted office in a place of bliss, that men in the place of bliss and the place of woe converse with one another. It could also be supposed that this teaches that positions in this life are reversed in death. However, I do not believe that it teaches any of these things, and I do not believe that our Lord meant to teach "conscious existence after death in happiness or woe." My reasons for believing this are set forth in detail in my brochure *The Rich Man and Lazarus*.(see the table of contents)

Question Number Twelve

If it is "only a parable," and represents the changed relations of Jew and Gentile after Christ's rejection, as some teach, why is the great gulf fixed?

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable, neither is it a historical record. I do not teach that it represents the changed relationship of the two classes referred to. It consists of words of ridicule, exposure and rebuke, spoken to His implacable enemies.

Question Number Thirteen

Could you honestly say that they who would pass from Judaism to Christianity, or vice versa, cannot do so?

No one who knows the Word could possibly say this. I have never said it.

Question Number Fourteen

If "eternal does not mean *eternal*," why is it put in contrast with "temporal?" - "The things that are *seen* are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18.)

A man would make himself utterly ridiculous to say that *eternal* does not mean *eternal*. However, it is certainly open to question whether the Greek word **aionios** means eternal or not. The real contrast in 2 Cor. 4:18 is between the Greek words **proskairos** and **aionios**. The word *proskairos* occurs four times in the New Testament. In Matt. 13 :21 it is translated "for a while"; in Mark 4 :17 "for a time"; and in Heb. 11 :25 "for a season." These passages establish the true meaning of the word. It is *temporary*, and not *temporal*. Temporary means lasting for a short time, temporal means pertaining to or limited by time.

The things which are seen are passing. They endure only for a short time. The things not seen will abide for the eons. They are eonian.

Question Number Fifteen

If there is a stronger word for eternal than that used for eternal or everlasting punishment, why is not the stronger word used for "eternal life," the "eternal Spirit," and the "King eternal"? (Matt. 25:46; Heb. 9:14; 1 Tim. 1:17.)

God used the right word in all these occurrences, and it would be well if all men would trace *out* these words in every occurrence so that they would know the mind of the Spirit in regard to them.

In Matthew 25 :46 it is plain that when those men go into "life eternal" they go into the Kingdom eon. All who are alive during the Kingdom eon will have eonian life. The Spirit of that eon will be the Holy Spirit, therefore, He is called the eonian Spirit. That eon will be ruled by the Lord Jesus, so He is called the eonian King.

Question Number Sixteen

If all the solemn statements as to an undying worm, outer darkness, and a lake of fire are symbols, is it to be supposed that the reality is weaker or less than the figures used to picture it?

Since figures are for emphasis they should be stronger than the reality. However, the question revolves around whether these are symbols or not. It is my understanding that the "undying worm" is a symbol or figure of something else, for I do not believe any worms will live forever. If this is correct then it becomes our task to discover what it symbolizes. "Outer darkness" must also be a figure, but "the lake of fire" is in no sense of the word a symbol or figure. It is a stark reality, a real lake that has for its contents molten sulphur (fire and brimstone).

Question Number Seventeen

If final punishment is extinction, how will it be possible for the judgment of the people of Sodom to be more tolerable than that of those of Capernaum? or that of Tyre and Sidon that Bethsaida or Chorazin? (Matt. 11:21-24.)

Final punishment is never called extinction in the Word of God. It is called destruction. This is the word which God uses to describe it, and I, for one, refuse to be moved away from it. The problem of the judgment being more tolerable for some than it is for others is probably just as puzzling to Mr. Ironside as he makes it appear to be for those who do not see as he does.

In question number eight he has the people of Sodom already suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, and in this question he admits that it will be "more tolerable" for them in the day of judgment. How can their present punishment be eternal, if it is to be changed to something more tolerable after the day of judgment. The problems created by this passage disappear at once when we recognize that judgment and punishment are two separate things, that it is the judgment that is more tolerable, and that punishment follows judgment and does not precede it. The men of Tyre and the men of Bethsaida are both dead. They will be raised from the dead to stand in judgment. That judgment will be easier to bear for the men of Tyre than for the men of Bethsaida.

Question Number Eighteen

If Judas is annihilated, what special force can you see in the Lord's words, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born?" (Matt. 26:24.)

Judas has not been annihilated, and will not be. He is dead, and will be raised from the dead to stand in judgment at the great white throne. His punishment will be declared to him in that day. I see no hope for this one who was a liar, a thief and a betrayer.

Question Number Nineteen

In what sense will it be any worse for Judas than for any other lost one, if all are to be annihilated together?

The words "It had been good for that man if he had not been born," do not necessarily refer to the future punishment of Judas.

Too many try to make these words mean that it will be worse for Judas in hell than for any other one there. When we consider the awful stigma that has been linked to the name of Judas for *two* thousand years, and will be linked to it as long as the Word of God endures, even if no other punishment comes upon him, it would still be far better for him if he had not been born.

Question Number Twenty

If "cast into the lake of fire" results in extinction, how is it that, "the beast and false prophet" are described alive in it a thousand years after they are cast into it? (Rev. 20:10.)

To be "cast into the lake of fire" does not result in extinction. It results in destruction.

This is not a mere quibble over words. We cannot permit men to take God's words from us and give their words to us. The word *destruction* is a scriptural word, a true and honest translation of the Greek word **apollumi**. It is evident that the orthodox are very much afraid of the word *destruction*. God says the end of some men is destruction. (Phil 3:19). He did not say *extinction*.

It is pure assumption without foundation for anybody to say that in Rev. 20:10 the beast and false prophet are described as being *alive* in the lake of fire after a thousand years. The most that can be made of this verse is that they are in the lake of fire after the thousand years, but, even then; this whole idea must rest upon the word supplied by the translator. It is the word *are*, and it appears in italics.

Some readers of this pamphlet may have heard Mr. Ironside tell a favorite *story* of his which always delights his hearers. It is an excellent anecdote for emphasizing the truth that the italicized words in the Bible are words supplied by the translator. It concerns a colored preacher who said that when he came upon *those* italicized words in the Bible, he always pounded the pulpit a bit, as he was sure this showed where God would have him put the emphasis. It now appears that Mr. Ironside is doing this very thing in regard to the italicized word *are* in Revelation 20:10.

It is freely admitted that there is an ellipsis in Revelation 20:10. Some word or words have been omitted and must be supplied if the passage is to make sense. The *King James* translator has supplied the word *are*, but if we attempt to discover just why this word was supplied, no legitimate reason can be found for it. In the figure of speech, ie. *ellipsis*, the words must be supplied from the context. Here the word *are* is absolutely foreign to any thought found in the context. It introduces a radical new thought that can be found nowhere else in the chapter.

For example, in Matthew 14:19 we read that the Lord Jesus "**gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.**" There is an ellipsis in the latter of these *two* statements which every reader must mentally supply or the statement will not make sense. If it is not supplied it will mean that he gave the disciples to the multitude. The reader will automatically supply the words "gave the loaves," and this is right, for an ellipsis must always be supplied from the thought appearing in the context. It would be wrong to supply some word *or* thought that is not indicated by the context. Suppose we should supply the words "sold the loaves" instead of "gave the loaves." This would be wicked, for it would slander the faithful disciples.

The words that should be supplied in Revelation 20:10 are the words *were cast*. These words appear in the remote context (19: 20) as well as in the immediate context, the passage itself. When this is done the passage will read:

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet were cast, and these shall be tormented day and night for the eons of the eons."

Question Number Twenty-One

On the same hypothesis, what force can you see in the words, "Shall be tormented, day and night, forever and ever." (Rev. 20:10.)

Godly men have always recoiled against the idea of God being responsible for the tormenting of anyone. The writings of Mr. Ironside will be searched in vain for *one* clear statement that the wages of sin is eternal torment.

God has erected *one* great barrier which should be sufficient to keep anyone from rashly accepting the doctrine that "eternal torment" is the penalty men must pay for the sins of this life. It is the statement in Revelation 14:10 where we are told, "**he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.**" The statement demands that whatever meaning we give to "tormented with fire and brimstone," it must be something that can take place in the presence of the Lamb.

When Mr. Ironside comes upon this difficult passage in his commentary *on Revelation*, he ignores it altogether. His treatment of it consists of some strong words of condemnation for the *Seventh Day Adventists* in regard to some teaching of theirs.

The time will *yet* come when hunger for the truth will drive students to the Word to make a complete and accurate examination of the word *torment*. It is an important field, and cultivators are badly needed.

Question Number Twenty-Two

What warrant have you to explain, "Thy throne, a God, is forever and ever," and "He that liveth forever and ever," as meaning eternity, while you limit, "tormented day and night forever and ever," to a brief period?

I would not explain the first two of these as meaning "eternity," neither would I limit the third to a brief period of time.

The Greek word **aion** was the first word of Greek I ever knew. At that time I learned that it meant an "age" or a period of time, and in all my studies since then I have never found one thing that could in any way prove this was wrong. I remember well the eloquent proofs Dr. James M. Gray set forth to prove that *aion* meant an age. That it does mean a period of time is demonstrated by its use in the New Testament where we read of "the end of the *aion*" in Matt. 24 :3, "this present evil *aion*" in Gal. 1 :4, and "the *aion* to come" in Mark 10 :30. I believe that this word should be translated by the English word *eon* every time it occurs. This makes it possible for us to preserve all the accuracy of the Godgiven Word. There we find the singular *eon*, the plural *eons*, the double singular *eon of the eon*, the singular with plural *eon of the eons*, and the double plural *eons of the eons*.

Up to the present time I have never found any writer of the fundamentalist group who seems to know this, care about it, or make any attempt to explain this scriptural phenomenon.

The full statement of Hebrews 1 :8, literally translated is as follows:

"But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for the eon of the eon, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom."

This statement does not speak of the duration of the throne of God. It speaks of the throne of the Son who is called God, and the statement has little to do with duration. The word *for* signifies *in relationship to*. The throne of Jesus Christ is not related to this present evil eon. His throne is related to a coming eon called "the eon of the eon." If men would realize the truth of this statement, they would cease trying to establish His kingdom now.

The second statement (**He that liveth forever and ever**) also has little to do with duration. We stultify the glorious message of these verses when we consider them to be proclamations concerning how long Jesus Christ will live. Some men live for no reason or purpose, but Christ lives in relationship to the eons of the eons. The same thought is seen in the statement "raised for (in relationship to) our justification."

The third passage referred to speaks of those who are tormented day and night for the eons of the eons. This also has little to do with duration, and the meaning of this passage depends upon the force of the Greek word which is here translated *torment*.

Question Number Twenty-Three

Do you really see any hint or thought of annihilation in the expression, "Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever?" (Jude 13.)

No, I do not see any hint or thought of annihilation in Jude 1 :13. In fact, I see no hint of annihilation anywhere in the Scripture. However, I do find some very strong and emphatic statements in regard to *destruction*.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Matt. 7 :13.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. 10:28.

"Whose end is destruction." Phil 3:19.

"And bring upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Peter 2:1. "Against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3:7.

Question Number Twenty-Four

Do not the words just quoted at least *seem* to picture the lost as comets or stars out of their orbits, for all eternity away from the Sun of righteousness?

What one may or may not see in this difficult passage is of no importance. Men show they have no case when they call it upon the witness stand so give testimony in support of eternal conscious torment. The term "wandering stars" refers to what those men were when these words were spoken. It does not refer to their state after the judgment. These will experience none of the blessings and joys of the Kingdom eon. To them is reserved the blackness of darkness.

Question Number Twenty-Five

Can you logically couple the thought of abiding wrath with annihilation? (John 3:36.)

I have never tried to couple these two together. One idea is from the Scripture and the other is a human idea, purely hypothetical in its character. However, when one has the true definition of "abiding wrath" and "destruction" the two can be logically coupled together. God's truths are always harmonious and never contradict.

Question Number Twenty-Six

Could unconscious spirits "desire a better country?" If not, how do you explain Heb. 11:16?

This question implies that we must see in this verse "conscious spirits" desiring a better country, else we have no explanation of it. I will admit that I know nothing about "unconscious spirits!" The word *spirit* is not mentioned in Hebrews 11. The verse under consideration teaches that living men desire a better country.

It appears that Mr. Ironside is forcing this verse to teach that Abraham and Isaac (as spirits) are now in heaven, yet desiring a better country, a heavenly one. I have heard of people "who wouldn't even be satisfied in heaven," but I am sure Abraham and Isaac would be desiring nothing better if they were there.

Question Number Twenty-Seven

If Paul believed that his soul and spirit would become unconscious at death, what did he mean when he wrote of being "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord?" (2 Cor. 5:8.)

The entire portion in which these words appear deals with ministry or service. This is the subject from 2 Cor. 2 :14 to 2 Cor. 6 :10. Paul's ministry was to the Church of God, and he had emphatically set this forth as a "body" in his first letter to the Corinthians. As long as Paul was with the Church of God (the body), he was absent from the Lord. He was willing to be absent from the Church of God (the body) and to be present with the Lord. The word *body* in 2 Cor. 5:10 also refers to the Church of God. The word *his* is in italics. Since every deed any man has ever done has been "in his body," it does not seem that Paul would state this here specifically. The judgment referred to here has to do with the deeds done in the body, the Church of God.

Question Number Twenty-Eight

Could one be *absent* from the body and asleep *in* the body at the sametime?

The body is an integral aspect of man and man cannot be absent from it. Neither can he sleep in it. I do not sleep in my body while my body is upon the bed. I sleep in the bed.

Question Number Twenty-Nine

What did Peter mean when he wrote: "Knowing that I must shortly put off this tabernacle?" (2 Pet. 1:14.)

There is a wrong and a right way to discover what Peter meant by these words. The *wrong* way is to take it for granted that by the word *tabernacle* he meant his body. The *right* way is to go to the Word of God and discover how the word *tabernacle* is used there.

The Greek word for tabernacle is **skene**, from which we get our word *scene*. In Greek, as well as in English, it is a word connected primarily with the theatre. Its scriptural meaning is easily discovered.

The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us (John 1 :14). What, then, was His tabernacle? In **Rev. 12:12** we read "**rejoice ye heavens, and ye that tabernacle in them.**" Was not heaven their tabernacle? If so, could not the earthly scene have been Peter's tabernacle? When God builds again "**the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down**" (Acts 15 :16), does this mean that He will "build again" David's body?

Peter's tabernacle was not his body. His tabernacle was the scene in which he lived his life and served his Lord. He was about to depart from that scene when he wrote the words recorded in 2 Peter 1 :14. This statement is made in full consideration of 2 Cor. 5:1 and 5 :4. The word *tabernacle* there has the same meaning.

Question Number Thirty

Does it not *imply*, at least, that he would be living apart from his bodily tabernacle?

Why is the word *bodily* inserted here? Peter's statement is direct and emphatic. He did not make it to "imply" something. It was made for teaching.

Question Number Thirty-One

If souls cannot consciously exist out of the body, why are they so pictured in Rev. 6:9-11 ?

I will begin my answer to this by a quotation from Mr. Ironside's writings:

"He is said to have signified it; that is, He made it known by signs or symbols. It is important to bear this in mind. This book (Revelation) is a book of symbols. But the careful student of the Word need not exercise his own ingenuity in order to think out the meaning of these symbols. It may be laid down as a principle of first importance that *every symbol used in Revelation is explained or alluded to somewhere else in the Bible*. Therefore, he who would get 'God's mind as to this portion of His Word must study with earnest and prayerful attention every other part of Holy Scripture."

Lectures on the Revelation, pages 13-14.

If we consistently follow these principles in interpreting Revelation 6 :9-11 the message of this portion can be discovered. This vision is symbolical, and we must not confuse the symbol with the thing symbolized. This is not a literal description of some scene that is to take place in the future. This symbol is explained by Genesis 4:10 where we read, "**The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.**" Over and over we are told in the Hebrew Scripture that the soul is in the blood. See Hebrew of Genesis 9 :4, Lev. 17 :12-14, Deu. 12 :23. Rev. 6 :9-11 does not picture "souls" consciously existing out of the body.

Question Number Thirty-Two

In what sense are some to be beaten with few stripes, and others with many, if all who die in their sins are to be annihilated? (Luke 12:47,48.)

In this passage there are three distinct classes. One is cut off and appointed a portion with the unbelievers. The second is beaten with many stripes, and the third with few stripes. Are all three of these classes lost, or just the first one who has his portion with the unbelievers? Therefore, it seems only fair to answer this question with another question. In what sense are some to be beaten with few stripes, and others with many, if all are to be eternally consciously tormented?

Question Number Thirty-Three

Is it honest to say, "Death means extinction, or annihilation," in the face of, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth?" (1 Tim. 5:6.)

Since I have never said that death means extinction or annihilation, it would be superfluous for me to answer this question. The "honest" thing to say about death is the scriptural thing. **Death is a return. The dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it.** No teaching in regard to death should ever be proven or disproven by a figure of speech, such as the ones found in 1 Tim. 5 :6 or Matt. 8 :22.

In his book *Death and Afterwards* Dr. Ironside defines death as follows:

"At death the spirit leaves the body. This, in fact, is what death is -- the separation of body and spirit." (Page 39.)

If we should try to read this definition into 1 Timothy 5:6 it would read like this:

She that has her spirit and body together in pleasure has her body and spirit separated while she has her body and spirit together.

By this ridiculous process it becomes evident that no matter what definition one gives of death, whether my definition or Mr. Ironside's, it will never stand up in the face of 1 Timothy 5 :6. This should teach us never to use figures of speech either to prove or disprove anything.

Question Number Thirty-Four

If death means extinction, did Christ become extinct when He died?

Death does not mean extinction, so Christ did not become extinct when He died. The record of Scripture concerning Him is: Christ died, He was buried, He rose again the third day, He was seen of Cephas. 1 Corinthians 15 :3-8. Most people limit the first three statements to His body. They do not believe "that God has raised HIM from the dead," as set forth in Romans 10 :9.

Question Number Thirty-Five

If so, do you see that He could not be "that Eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us?" (1 John 1:2.)

As this question is related to the idea the Christ became extinct, an idea that I do not hold or teach, no answer is required.

Question Number Thirty-Six

Have you observed that the Greek word which is translated "destroy" in many passages, is translated *lost* in Luke 15:32?

My search for the truth has led me to examine carefully every one of the ninety-two occurrences of the Greek word **apollumi**. I believe I have observed every fact in connection with these occurrences. It is translated *destroy* 26 times, *perish* 33 times, *lose* 31 times, *marred* 1 time, *die* 1 time.

The basic, fundamental and primary meaning of the Greek word *apollumi* is "to destroy utterly," or "to cause to perish." However, since anything that perishes, or is destroyed, is lost, the word *apollumi* has the secondary and derived meaning of *lose* or *lost*.

For example: the primary and fundamental meaning of the word *broadcast* is to scatter seed. For proof of this consult any dictionary published before 1920. However, in the transition of language the word *broadcast* now has a secondary and derived meaning - to disseminate audible messages by wireless telephony. Does this secondary and derived meaning cancel the primary and fundamental meaning? Would it not be pitiable to hear anybody argue that since *broadcast* means to transmit a message by radio, it cannot mean to scatter seed?

In Luke 15 :32 the prodigal son is described as having been lost and found. He is also described as having been dead and alive. If we are to learn the meaning of "lost" from this portion, why not also use it to teach the meaning of "death"?

Question Number Thirty-Seven

Would you conclude from this that the prodigal had been annihilated while he was in the far country?

That would indeed be a crude conclusion, to say the least.

Question Number Thirty-Eight

If not, is it logical - is it true, or false - to maintain that destruction and annihilation are synonymous?

It is certainly illogical and, I believe, false to maintain that destruction and annihilation are synonymous. However, when one attempts to teach the plain scriptural truths in regard to destruction, his detractors will always accuse him of teaching annihilation. Destruction is certainly a scriptural term, the primary meaning of *apollumi*. Annihilation cannot be designated as a scriptural term for it is not needed to translate any Hebrew or Greek word in either Testament.

Question Number Thirty-Nine

Have you observed that in Scripture life and existence are never confounded?

These are never confounded in Scripture, and only the unintelligent would be guilty of confounding them outside of Scripture. All inanimate things exist, but they do not have life.

Question Number Forty

If men exist now, who "have not the life" (1 John 5:12), why may they not exist eternally without that life - which is eternal life?

Everything that exist alive must have life. Nothing can exist alive without life. There is no source of life but God.

"Seeing He giveth to all life, and breath and all things." Acts 17:25.

"For in Him we live, and move and have our being." Acts 17:28.

Man cannot exist alive eternally without life flowing to him from God.

Question Number Forty-One

Christians are said to "have come to . . . the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23). In what sense have these spirits been made perfect, if unconscious?

In question number twenty-six, Mr. Ironside has these "spirits" desiring a better country, while in this question he has them "made perfect." The word "spirit" in Hebrews 12 :23 refers to character or personality. Just as we use it as we speak of a man being a good spirit, bad spirit, mean spirit, or poor in spirit. The law could make nothing perfect, but the work of Christ could and did. This was retroactive in the case of the just who dies before His advent. See Romans 3 :25.

Question Number Forty-Two

It is sometimes said that as no human father would cast his child into material fire, so God will never cast sinners into the fires of hell and let them suffer forever; but is not this an ignoring of what we see every day?

No human father possessing the least grain of love and pity for his child would ever cast it into material fire. I find no statement in Scripture that God will ever cast any human being alive into material fire. Satan, the beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire, but there is no reason for believing any member of this unholy trio is a human being. It is my understanding that Scripture teaches that men will be dead when cast into the lake of fire.

"Fear Him, which AFTER HE HATH KILLED has power to cast into hell (gehenna)." Luke 12:5.

Question Number Forty-Three

Would you allow one you loved to be afflicted with a painful or loath some disease if you could hinder it

No, I would not.

Question Number Forty-Four

Does not God permit such afflictions to go on for years?

At the present time he does, but in the Kingdom eon He will not permit them to go on for one hour.

Question Number Forty-Five

If He permits great anguish in this life as a result of sin, who can say what sin may entail in the world to come?

At the present time all human experience is so abnormal that little can be learned from observing it. I see great anguish in this life which is not the result of sin. See John 9:2-3. Luke 13:1-5. The problem of human suffering cannot be solved by attributing it to sin in this life. In order to be able to say truthfully what the punishment of sin will be after this life, we must go to the Word of God and carefully examine every statement made there. It is my prayer that more men will lay aside their preconceptions and prejudices and do this.

Question Number Forty-Six

Have you observed that sinful men eagerly accept the teaching that punishment is not eternal, while holy men have ever received the Bible's teaching as to it?

I have observed that the men of the world and Christendom as a whole believe the same things in regard to future punishment. The world believes that at death men either wing their way to heaven or descend into hell. Those who descend into hell are tormented eternally. This is the belief of the world in general, and Christendom in general holds the same to be true.

The type of argument presented in this question will always be amusing to those who desire to be fair and honest in all controversy. I can have no sympathy with those who put forth the claim that all good and holy men believe as they do, while all who believe otherwise have only the evil ones for their companions. It would not be difficult to point to some very bad men who believe in eternal conscious torment. I must also admit that there are men who believe as I do who could never get a character reference from me. There are good and bad men on both sides of these questions.

Question Number Forty-Seven

If *annihilation* is the punishment of sin, why did the Lord Jesus speak of “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” following the being cast into outer darkness? (Matt. 8:12.)

Annihilation is NOT the punishment for sin. If any one word can be used to describe future punishment, it is the word *destruction*. However, the argument presented in this question could just as well apply to destruction, therefore, I will answer it.

Matthew 8:12 deals with the "children of the kingdom". This is the (future) nation of Israel. "Weeping" signifies sorrow, and "grinding of teeth" signifies pain. For over 1900 years, the children of Israel have been in utter darkness. Their sorrows and suffering are so well known that no examples need be given. Matthew 8:12 has nothing to do with future punishment.

Question Number Forty-Eight

If hell - or rather "hades," is merely the grave, why is it put in contrast with heaven in Luke 10:15?

Hades is not the grave. It is a state, not a place. It is the state of death with resurrection in view. The language of Luke 10 :15 is highly figurative. Capernaum had NOT been literally exalted to heaven. Would anyone care to define heaven as being the place to which Capernaum was exalted. In this passage "heaven" means figuratively "the highest heights" and "hades" means the "deepest depths." The latter is best expressed by the word *oblivion*. Luke 10 :15 is not the place to learn the meaning of "heaven" or "hades."

Question Number Forty-Nine

Since the people of all cities of the past have gone down to the grave, in what sense was Capernaum's punishment different from theirs?

I do not understand that the "punishment" of the people of Capernaum will be different from the people of all cities in the past. The passage states that the *judgment* will be more tolerable for other cities. Judgment is not punishment. It may result in punishment. The whole question of degrees of punishment is a difficult one, and it is useless for anyone to infer that it presents no problem.

Question Number Fifty

Caviller! Consider this well: "How shall you escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33.)

Having failed to present even a plausible case for his position in forty-nine questions, Mr. Ironside here reveals the weakness of his position by hurling an epithet at all who do not see these things as he does. Furthermore, he infers that all who differ with him in regard to these things have no hope of escaping the "damnation of hell." These things may frighten the one who does not know the Word, but they hold no terror for those who know the grace of God in salvation.

I am no caviller. I represent myself to be an honest and sincere student of the Word of God. I am exceedingly desirous of solving some of the innumerable problems that have clustered around the great subjects of man's nature and man's destiny. Nevertheless, even though the epithet does not apply to me, I consider it a happy privilege to tell how I shall escape the "damnation of hell," whatever that phrase may mean.

Constant application of my mind to the Word of God has caused me by the Spirit of God to realize the awful fact of sin in this world and sin my own life. I have learned from the Word the damage it has caused, the guilt it has incurred, the alienation it has effected. The Word has taught me that I can do nothing in myself to repair the damage, to remove the guilt, or to restore fellowship with God. This demands that wholly apart from me some provision must be made that will answer every demand that the holiness of God makes, solve every problem that sin has imposed, and meet every difficulty that it has created.

God has made this provision through the work of Christ. His complete and perfect answer to my need for salvation is set forth in Paul's letter to the Romans. The gospel recorded there reveals a salvation that is of such transcendent nature that it meets all my requirements in a perfect manner. Nothing has been omitted from it that I need to supply. God has fully considered every road over which I will ever travel. He knew my weaknesses, and my total inability to keep myself saved even if He saved me. His provision for me faces the facts of sin in the world and sin in my life.

It was planned in view of the guilt sin incurred against me, my weaknesses, God's own justice, the strength of this world and the power of Satan. It takes into consideration life, death, angels, principalities, powers, everything present, all things future, height, depth, and every created being. It has made full provision so that none of these shall ever separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

The glad message found in Romans is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. After more than two decades in which I have carefully considered every word written there, I can say with certainty and assurance - I believe! It reveals a righteousness of God which is unto all and upon all them that believe - and I believe. The propitiation set forth there is through faith in His blood - and I have faith in His blood.

This is how I have escaped the penalty that was due to me because of my sins.

The End SS31