



DISCIPLESHIP

Life After Death



Gordon Lindsay

CHAPTER 1

Life After Death

Everyone born in this world has a time to live and a time to die. From the moment we begin to live, we also begin to die. What happens when that hour comes to us, as it does to all, and our soul goes out to join the ranks of the numberless dead? Will consciousness survive that moment? “If a man die, shall he live again?” Job once asked that question, and almost every human being has asked it since.

Man is sharply distinguished from all other creatures because he has the inherent capacity to think in terms of the future. While an animal lives in the present, man with his superior intelligence has been so created that he instinctively must take the future into his reasoning. He knows that every choice he makes has an influence of some kind upon his welfare in this life.

Therefore, if consciousness survives death, there is another and far more important future to consider. We call this future the hereafter. What will his state be a hundred years from now? A thousand or a million years from now? This is the supreme question of life.

Immemorial men have asked the question, “Does consciousness survive death? Is there life on the other side of the grave? Or, is eternity only a dreamless sleep that has no waking?” If the latter is true, and the final lot of the righteous and the wicked is the same, then it is fair reasoning that men should get all the pleasure they can out of the present and simply forget the future. There is no use in laboring for something in which there can be no return. There is no purpose in hoping for what can never be. Even the Apostle Paul said, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable ... let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die” (1 Corinthians 15:19, 32).

But most people, whether good or bad, are not convinced that death is the end. Their deepest instincts tell them there is something beyond the grave. Whether

you live in Christian or heathen lands, the belief that consciousness survives death is almost universal.

The Moslem has his Mohammedan Paradise; the Indian, his happy hunting ground; the Hindu, his Nirvana; and so on. Only the most hardened or those who have come under the influence of gross materialistic teachings, contend that the grave marks the end. Only those whose sensibilities have become calloused with sin reject the possibility of the hereafter.

It is natural for the child to believe in a life after death. It is only after he becomes deeply enmeshed in the toils of sin or entangled in the affairs of this life that he seeks to drown out thoughts of life after death. Even so, an inner voice still continues to whisper there is something beyond, and in most cases, he can never completely escape from the voice of conscience that warns of a future reckoning.

Can it be that this powerful and universal instinct of the human soul of immortality is false? Can it be that this inner call to life beyond death is only a mirage, an illusion to mock man forever? God forbid! The Bible says, "Deep calls unto deep" (Psalms 42:7).

Nature itself teaches that the instincts of even the animal kingdom have a true relationship with reality. The carrier pigeon, if transported from its habitation, has an instinct within it that guides it back infallibly to its resting place. Though the hour may be in the dead of night and the distance is far, no matter, the instinct placed within its tiny breast does not lead it astray. It truly guides it home. How much more is a man worth than a bird?

The salmon, which has spent its years at sea, is moved just before death by some strange instinct back to the waters from whence it came. Against the swift current it fights its way, leaping the waterfall, now running the rapids, taking no thought of food or rest, until at last it reaches the place where it was given life. There, as it fulfills its cycle, it performs the function of reproducing its kind. How much better is man than a salmon!

Can it be then, that man, who is born in this world with his superior talents and faculties of life, love, faith, hope, an instinct of a life hereafter, a consciousness of God, shall find all these only to lead him astray in the end? God forbid!

Nature itself teaches that life may pass through distinctly different forms; that life may even come out of death. The common butterfly lives the first part of its existence as an ugly, crawling caterpillar. After fulfilling its course, the caterpillar curls up and seemingly dies. To one not informed, it would seem that life has gone forever. What remains has all the appearance of a corpse, and it lays in a torpid death-like state for many days. Nevertheless, nature has a miracle just waiting to happen. Out of the ugly body of death emerges a beautiful butterfly! No longer forced to crawl on the ground, it spreads its wings and flies away. How much more is a man worth than a butterfly?

The Apostle Paul calls on nature to further illustrate how life comes out of

death. He points to the grain of wheat which is sown in the ground, only to perish. But nature has served another miracle, and from the seed that dies, there comes a new life that not only perpetuates life, but increases its kind. How much more is a man worth than a grain of wheat! What God can do for something as small as a seed, he can surely do for man, the masterpieces of His creation!

The materialist contends that the consciousness of man emanates only from the brain. When the brain dies the personality of that man perishes forever. Recent findings of science fail to substantiate this theory. The brain is not the real man. It is only an instrument the man uses. As the infant changes from infancy to manhood, the brain develops into a wrinkled complex labyrinth of convolutions which store up knowledge the man has learned. Learning is not the man; it is something that is added to the man.

Surgery has succeeded in rare cases in the removal of a portion of the human brain without causing death. Even in these instances, the personality always remains. Part of the body may become paralyzed, the power of speech may disappear or the man in some other way may be incapacitated, but the man is still there. There is a person with a distinct personality that dwells behind the brain.

It is natural that the human race should long for certain knowledge of what awaits beyond the veil. Job, who put forth that universal question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" was finally able to answer it. In Job 19:25-26, he said:

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God."

Yes, God, by direct revelation, has shown there is life beyond this life. While not revealing that which would satisfy mere human curiosity, God has indeed given us all the knowledge we can wisely use. It is evident above all else that God wished for us to understand that if we live this life according to His will, we need not have any fear concerning the one who is to come.

One of the great purposes of divine revelation is to warn men regarding their manner of living in this world because it will have a permanent effect on their life in the next. Therefore, whatever determines one's destiny in the next world, should have man's most reverent attention in this one.

And so, we begin our investigation of what God has revealed to man concerning the state of the departed dead. We shall observe, as we refer to the pages of His Holy Word, the gradual unfolding of this subject by the prophets, down through the successive centuries, until at length Christ comes and more fully lifts the veil. In the chapters which are before us, we shall consider the significance of this Divine unfolding.

CHAPTER 2

Bible Proof Of Life Beyond Death

Although science and nature offer arresting evidence of the reality of some kind of life after death, it is only by Divine revelation that we have definite knowledge concerning the hereafter as it effects the departed human soul. In this chapter, we shall note a number of passages in the New Testament which will allow the reader a brief survey of some of its important evidence of the truth that the soul of the Christian saint is conscious after death. We shall note specifically the present condition and circumstances of the righteous dead, referring the reader to later chapters for consideration of the state of the wicked dead.

At this time, we shall not undertake a detailed exposition of these texts. Our only purpose is to show they undeniably teach that the souls of the righteous who have left this world are conscious and are, in fact, in the immediate Presence of Christ in Paradise. We shall begin taking note of some statements Jesus made that have an important bearing on this subject.

1. Men Can Kill The Body, But Not The Soul

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

In this statement by our Lord Jesus, the body and soul are clearly distinguished. Men may kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul. The most important part of the human being survives after the body dies. Jesus did not consider death of the body something to fear, but rather, men should be fearful that because of their neglect or disobedience, God should find it necessary to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna (hell), through His judgment.

2. The Spirits Of The Righteous At Death Go To Paradise

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise’” (Luke 23:43).

When Christ spoke these words, He and the thief were on the cross with a very short time to live. Life for them was swiftly ebbing away. The thief, in spite of his suffering, had closely observed Christ as He endured the pain of the crucifixion. He saw Him as He prayed for His tormentors, and as he watched,

he became persuaded that Jesus was the Son of God. He humbly asked the Lord to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus heard this penitent's cry and promised him, even before the day was over, he would be with Him in Paradise.

It is evident, if the spirit of the thief on the cross and the spirit of Jesus had ceased to exist at death, the promise He would be with the penitent that very same day in Paradise was misleading.

3. God Is Not The God Of The Dead, But Of The Living

“For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him” (Luke 20:38).

The Sadducees were the materialists of their day. They did not believe in angels or in spirits or in the resurrection. In an attempt to trap Christ in His words, they invented the hypothetical case of seven brothers, the first of whom married a wife who in due time outlived him. According to the Mosaic law, the next brother married the widow to raise up seed to his brother. In this story they presumed each brother to die in succession, thus requiring the next younger brother to marry the widow. “If there were a resurrection,” they asked, “then whose wife should the woman be?” Jesus answered their question by exposing their ignorance of spiritual things. “In the first place,” He said, “those who will be worthy of the resurrection of the just shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as the angels of heaven.” To further refute the error of their reasoning, Jesus called attention to God's statement to Moses at the burning bush. Here Jehovah revealed Himself as the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Jesus then added, “God is not the God of the dead, but the living.” What did He mean by this? He could only mean one thing. Somewhere in the universe, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were conscious and “living unto God.”

4. To Depart From The Body Is To Be Present With The Lord

“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you” (Philippians 1:23-24).

Here is a revealing statement by the Apostle Paul. At the time he made it he had been laboring in the cause of Christ for many years. Now, he was “Paul the aged.” His declining strength and constant sufferings and infirmities made him long to be at home with his Savior. Yet, he felt a responsibility to converts such as those who lived in Philippi. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul said he was hard-

pressed between the two, whether to depart and be with Christ or whether to abide and continue with those who needed his help. The latter consideration according to his way of the thinking was more important, and so he reassured the Philippians that he hoped to continue with them for another season.

The fact is Paul believed when he left the body, he would be with Christ. If consciousness would cease, and all that was left of him would vanish in the grave, then there would be no incentive to leave this world. Rather, he knew when he left this world, he would be ushered into the Presence of Christ. This is why he looked forward to the hour when he would leave this world.

5. Paul's Experience Of Being Caught Up To The Third Heaven

“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

Paul had a wonderful experience. He was caught up into Paradise and saw amazing things which he felt he dared not reveal. Nevertheless, something he does say is of special interest in connection with the matter before us. Paul said, “When he witnessed these things, he was not certain at the time whether he was in the body or out of the body.” Paul of course might have been bodily transported to heaven, just like Elijah, but he was not certain this is what happened. In fact, it is doubtful this actually took place. (Some believe Paul had this vision when stoned and left for dead. He mentions this experience in the context (2 Corinthians 11:25, also Acts 14:19-20). It is probable that Paul was caught up to Paradise out of the body, but whether he was or was not, makes no difference. Paul, by his statement, showed that he believed if he were out of the body, it was possible for his spirit to witness things in heaven. He inferred that when the spirit leaves the body, it is still conscious and capable of enjoying the bliss of Paradise.

CHAPTER 3

The Rich Man And Lazarus – What Jesus Revealed About Life After Death

As we have seen, the Old Testament gives us some important information concerning the nature of man's existence after death. Enough information to show the grave is not the end. From its teaching, we see there is an intermediate state of the soul, and the nature of existence during that time depends on the way the person has lived while on earth. We have also observed from the Old Testament that there is apparently a separation of the righteous from the wicked in Sheol (Hades). We shall now see that Christ lifts the curtain and reveals what actually happens to the soul when it leaves the body. This He does in His narrative of the Rich man and Lazarus.

This story of the Rich man and Lazarus is not a parable in the usual sense. A parable is an analogy between visible things and invisible. Here, we have a direct statement about the invisible things themselves. When Jesus says, "There was a certain rich man," we can believe just that – there was a certain rich man.

Jesus chose a man of wealth to illustrate what happens to the unconverted after death, and it is deeply significant. It is notable that the rich man was not accused of committing a single sin. He is not said to have been vicious. In the eyes of the world he was no doubt considered a successful man. Nothing is said about his riches being ill-gotten, and his overall wealth, most likely by some, was considered an indication of Divine favor. Dives (as tradition has given us the rich man's name) had everything this world had to offer. He was clothed in purple and fine linen, and was able to indulge in every bodily comfort and extravagance. He enjoyed what men call the good things of life.

The fatal flaw in his character was that he lived solely for this world and manifested no interest in the one that was to come. He acted as if life on this earth was to be an unending thing.

Into the narrative, Jesus introduces a second character whose name is Lazarus. This man, a beggar, lies at the rich man's gates, diseased, hungry, in rags and desiring the crumbs which have fallen from his table. He has been brought here, not at the request of the rich man, but under pressure of great want. He lies in rags, exposed to the weather, covered with sores, his body wasting away. Dives has ample opportunity to observe the sad condition of the beggar each time he passes through the gate. How much Lazarus received from him we are not told. The inference is that he was given merely the crumbs from the rich man's table. Only the dogs of the city seem to show sympathy for him, as they stopped to lick

his sores while passing by.

There is, however, one hopeful ray in this sad picture. The man's name is Lazarus, which signifies "God my help." The poor beggar, deserted by man and left to perish from hunger and disease, looks to a hope beyond this world. His trust is in God. He sees something beyond the grave. Death eventually comes to the beggar and mercifully relieves his suffering and misery.

The rich man also dies and is buried. We are not told that Lazarus received a burial. At the most, it was only a pauper's burial. The Lord specifically notes, however, that the rich man received a burial. No doubt, the funeral was conducted with grand ceremony and was probably a much talked about event in the community where he lived. Gradually, like all the others, he was forgotten, and his body slowly turned back to dust.

Up to this point Jesus has related an event that has no apparent importance to our subject. We shall, however, see the significance of this when Jesus continues to carry the narrative forward, beyond where human biographers must stop. In doing so He reveals what happens on the other side of time. He lifts the veil on the mystery of death and shows that this event did not mark the end for either the rich man or Lazarus, but the spirits of both men immediately went to adjacently located spheres in Hades. Moreover we are informed – and this is important – these spheres in Hades are separated by a "great gulf."

Lazarus Carried By The Angels

Jesus, in narrating the events at Lazarus's departure, shows us what happens to a righteous person after death. The moment the spirit left the body of Lazarus, angels received it and tenderly carried it to Paradise. (Abraham's Bosom is the name used by Jesus to denote Paradise.)

This disclosure that the angels convey the spirits to Paradise is not surprising. The Old Testament Scriptures clearly reveal that angels encamp round about them that fear Him, and delivered them (Psalm 34:7). The Psalmist also declares the angels are given charge by the Lord over those who put their trust in Him.

"For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).

Jesus intimates that every believer, including children, has a guardian angel watching over them.

"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).

Whether or not an angel is present every moment of a believer's life may be uncertain, but it is certain angels are present at the moment of one's death. It is a well-known circumstance that many persons at the time of their passing have given testimony to seeing angels.

It is indeed a comforting thought, that at the moment when death comes for the righteous, angels are present to take the spirit and convey it safely to its proper place. Lazarus was the lowest on the scale as far as human society was concerned. He was only a poor despised beggar. Nonetheless, not one angel, but several, were present at his death to convey his spirit to the comfort and peace of Abraham's bosom.

Nothing is said about angels attending the passing of the rich man. He lived exclusively for this world, and was not to be bothered about the one to come. Since he showed no interest in making provision for what he knew was certainly coming, he could hardly expect anyone else to make provision for him. He had ignored the poor beggar lying at his gate. Now, he was a beggar, and there is no one to care for him.

Those who reject God invite the presence and company of demons. Before Judas committed his treacherous act of betraying Christ and committing suicide, Satan entered into him (John 13:27). The devil was therefore present at the moment of Judas' death. Whether he continued with him as he descended into Hades is not known. Satan apparently possessed the keys to Hades until Christ wrested them from him at the time of His descent into the under world (Revelation 1:18).

Whether demons accompany the spirits of the lost into the underworld of Hades can not be certainly stated. It makes no difference. That lost soul is attracted to the evil elements of the shades of darkness. The law of gravitation of the spirit would carry him down into Hades. Nothing a disembodied spirit may do can overrule or reverse the law. It is important then, you like Lazarus, make "God your help." In doing so, you are prepared when that inevitable moment comes for you to leave this world. It is important that angels, and not demons, be there to guide you into Paradise, into the land of peace and hope.

The Two Compartments Of Hades

In the Old Testament, we were given a number of indirect hints that Hades, the abode of the dead, was not all one compartment, but that the righteous and the wicked inhabitants were separated. Now, we are to learn there was indeed an impassable gulf separating the two. Jesus revealed in this account that Lazarus and the rich man did not go to the same place, although the two spheres were adjacent to each another. The rich man did not go to Abraham's bosom, but to another compartment of Hades.

What was the reason the rich man was not taken to Paradise, where Lazarus

went? There are several reasons:

1. The rich man lived only for this world and made no provision for the next. It could not be said of him that “God was my help.” God helps those who ask for His help.

2. The rich man also rejected the call of his conscience. Although a poor sick beggar was at his gate, he had no compassion on him. Dressed in the costliest of clothes himself, he dined daily on the finest and tastiest of foods, without any thought or regard of the wretched individual who was dying at his gates from destitution and hunger.

3. We may infer that Dives had access to the Scriptures, just as his brethren who were still alive had, but either he did not believe them or he was just to be busy to be bothered (Luke 16:31).

4. It is evident, however, that Dives had some understanding of the Scriptures. He knew what repentance was, Luke 16:30, but apparently believed that God could perform special miracles in order to get people to repent. Luke 16:31, Jesus said, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” The rich man had not repented, and in that condition he died and went to the abode of the unrighteous dead – not because he had been a rich man, but because he had not repented.

When Dives awoke to the fearful realization he was in the wrong side of the Hades, he made a desperate effort to secure help from the outside. Crying to Abraham, who was afar off with Lazarus in his company, he asked that Lazarus might dip the top of his finger in water and apply it to his tongue. He did not ask to get out of Hades. He did not ask that he, too, might be able to enter Paradise. He knew he could not. He asked only for the smallest, possible favor, but it was denied him. Abraham replied saying:

“And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us” (Luke 16:26).

Jesus made it clear that the bounds of the abode of the dead are fixed. In Hades the souls of the righteous and the unrighteous do not intermingle. Sin is a contagious disease. Millions in this sad world are daily drawn into wickedness by others. This is why the Lord had to destroy the Canaanites. They could have tempted the children of Israel to imitate their evil deeds. In the world to come the wicked must no longer be at liberty to infect others with the disease of sin. They must be put under a drastic quarantine, lest the righteous contract their disease and their welfare also be jeopardized.

There is a great gulf fixed between the abode of the righteous dead and the wicked. At death, one goes to his own place. The righteous go to the abode of the righteous; the wicked go to the abode of the wicked. So, it is written, Judas went

to “his own place” (Acts 1.25). Always those of a like kind are attracted to others of their kind. Wicked spirits are out of harmony with the redeemed spirits. If they were to go to Paradise, they would suffer agony. It is better for them to be with those who are as they are.

In Death There Is Consciousness – The Spirit Has Senses Corresponding To Those Of The Body

Jesus revealed that the dead are conscious. Many attempts have been made to prove that the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a fable – that what Jesus said has no basis in fact. Even if we assume the story were a parable (and it is more than that), could it be said that it teaches unconsciousness after death? The truth is just the opposite is taught, and since this, in fact, isn’t the truth, then why teach it at all?

Man is not only body; he is spirit, also. Just as the body has five senses, so the spirit has corresponding senses. Dives in Hades was quite conscious:

1. He was able to see. “And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” (Luke 16:23).
2. He could hear. He heard what Abraham said to him (Vs. 25-31).
3. He could talk. He begged Abraham that Lazarus might come to him.
4. He could taste. He wanted water applied to his tongue.
5. He could feel. He was tormented.
6. He had memory. “Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime ...’”
7. He had remorse. He wanted Lazarus to go and preach repentance to his five brethren.

The rich man in Hades had consciousness, and his senses apparently were keen. How was it possible for the rich man to see, when his physical eyes had glazed in death? How could he taste or feel or hear when his body was in the tomb? The answer is simple. Just as the body has physical senses, so the spirit has spiritual senses. When a man dreams in his sleep, his eyes may be completely closed. His ears are deaf, but yet, he sees and hears. A dream can be as intensely real to the mind as anything experienced when the body is awake. While a man sleeps, what he sees is real to him. What the spirit of man sees is just as real as what the physical body sees.

The Rich Man’s Remorse

The reversal in eternity is appalling. Without hope in God, the situation of the soul in departing this world is indeed a desperate one. No messengers from the angelic world are there to convey the spirit to a place of rest and peace. The discordant soul is pulled upon, just like gravity, by the deadly attraction of the place where other discordant souls exist. No true comfort is ever found in the compartment of Hades where the wicked dwell. There is no food, no water, nothing to rest or comfort the soul.

Worst of all, there is no hope. Dives expressed no anticipation in escaping from this place. His realization of the purity of Paradise stifled any hope that he might enter there. He was also reminded that a great gulf was fixed between the two. There was no intercourse between the abode of the unrighteous and that of the righteous.

He recognized his unbelief, his indifference to the God who had created him; his heartlessness for others who were less fortunate during his lifetime and his established habits of selfishness had brought him to this awful place. What a calamity! Oh, the hopelessness of it!

The rich man had memory. He remembered his five brothers who were still alive. They, no doubt, had divided his fortune among themselves and were passing the days of their probation in the same thoughtless and careless manner he did. They were eating and drinking and indulging in unbridled fancy; all unaware that they were steadily advancing one day at a time toward the hour when they would arrive in the same hopeless place where he was now. There were many other wicked spirits already there, of course, but they didn't offer comfort or comradeship. Some have said if they were to go to Hades, they would have plenty of "company." But there is no such thing as "company" in Hades. Dives looked forward with only apprehension and dread to the day when the first of his brothers would enter the portals of night and share his doom. Oh, if only they could be prevented from coming there! He suggests to Abraham that Lazarus might go to his father's house and warn his brethren. It was a futile request; a hopeless plea of a desperate man, and all to no avail. Abraham informs him that if his brethren would not believe the Scriptures, they would not believe if one should rise from the dead, either.

"But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead'" (Luke 16:31).

This closes the recorded conversation between Abraham and Dives, but one thing needs to be added. Dives, now a lost soul, is overwhelmed with remorse. He is roused to evangelism. He now fully believes in the Gospel of repentance. He begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brethren. But the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead could not be granted. (Jesus did raise another Lazarus from the dead, and unbelievers did not repent. John 11:43). Only to the living, is the ministry of miracles available. God, grant the Church the wisdom to be able to enter into this ministry of the supernatural, so the lost might be brought to repentance, and men shall not go to this land of darkness and hopelessness!

Abraham's Bosom

What a contrast is the lot of the one time beggar! Lazarus was not yet in heaven when Jesus related this story. He was in the other compartment of Hades. We shall not tarry with Lazarus for we shall presently learn more about what happens to the saints since Christ's resurrection from the dead. We can say this much. Lazarus was comforted. His days of trouble and suffering were over. He was at peace. He no longer hungered or thirsted. He had the companionship of Abraham and all the saints. He dwelt in a land of hope.

CHAPTER 4

Visions Of Hades And Paradise

The Bible is complete in its revelation and establishing doctrine. Basic facts concerning the state of both the righteous and the wicked who have died have been fully revealed. We may discount the claims of spiritualism, regarding the supposed communication with the dead as not true or a counterfeit. Such manifestations are actually impersonations of wicked spirits who pretend to be departed friends or relatives of those who violate the command of the Scriptures in seeking to communicate with the dead (Isaiah 8:19-20).

However, there have been authenticated cases down through the church age of people who apparently died, and then were permitted to return to tell the story. At the command of Christ, Lazarus, after being dead for four days, returned to life. If his experience had been recorded and preserved, he would have had an interesting story. Jesus told the disciples there would be occasions when they would raise the dead (Matthew 10:8). Such events happened under the ministries of Peter and Paul (Acts 9:40). Similar occurrences have taken place since, during the Church Age. There have been a few cases of people whose spirits temporarily left this world, but then were restored to their bodies. These various accounts of what happened between the time the spirit left and then returned to the body are in close harmony with Bible revelation.

There have also been notable instances of persons who have been caught up to Paradise or the third heaven – whether in the body, or out of the body, they, like the Apostle Paul, have not always been certain (2 Corinthians 12). No doubt, the most remarkable of all such instances in modern times is that of Marietta Davis, who for nine days lay in a trance from which she could not be awakened and during which times she witnessed visions of heaven and hell. Nothing speaks more eloquently of the authenticity of her narrative than her language and style which has an inspired touch. The story which she told after her return is in harmony with Biblical revelation of the nature of man's existence after death. The narrative relates many incidental details of interest as to what takes place after the human spirit leaves the body. The unfolding drama is a solemn object lesson to which every mortal who lives in this world would do well to take heed.

In this chapter, we shall give a brief summary of the story of what Marietta saw during the nine days when she was out of the body. Previous to the time of her vision she had been under deep conviction of sin, but had not seemingly obtained an assurance in her soul. Consequently, as is explained in the narrative, when she left the body, she was to a certain extent susceptible to both the attraction of Paradise and the world of lost spirits. For this reason, perhaps, she was chosen to

witness the scenes of both worlds. Besides visiting Paradise, she was permitted for a brief period to enter Hades and learn some of its dark secrets. What she tells us is in harmony with what Christ revealed to us concerning the state of the rich man in Luke 16. Her story is a solemn warning to all who tread unheeded, follow the paths that lead to death or who follow after the false pleasures of this sinful world. When these kind leave the body, they may be drawn by the law of evil attraction and are plummeted into Hades, the nether world, the land of lost hope. Her narrative follows:

Visions Of Heaven And Hell

As the spirit of Marietta Davis left her body, she saw a light descending toward her having the appearance of a brilliant star. When the light drew near, she found that it was an angel who was approaching. The heavenly messenger saluted her and then said, "Marietta, thou desirest to know me. In my errand to thee I am called the Angel of Peace. I come to guide thee where those exist who are from earth, whence thou art."

Before the angel escorted her upward she was given a view of the earth at which the angel made this comment: "Time quickly measureth the fleeing moments of human existence and generations follow generations in quick succession." Explaining the effect of death upon a human being the angel declared, "The departure of the human spirit from its unsettled and shattered habitation below, worketh no change in its nature. Those of discordant and unhallowed natures are attracted by like elements, and enter into regions overhung with clouds of night; while those who for the love of good, desire pure associations, are by heavenly messengers conducted to the orb of glories appearing above the intermediate scene."

As Marietta and the angel ascended, they at length came to what she was told was the outskirts of Paradise. There they entered upon a plain where there were trees bearing fruit. Birds were singing and sweet scented flowers were blooming. Marietta would have spent more time there, but was informed by her guide they must not tarry, "for thy present mission is to learn the condition of the departed child of God."

She Meets The Redeemer

As she and her guide continued onward, they at length came to the gateway of the City of Peace. Entering, she saw saints and angels with harps of gold. They continued on until the angel brought Marietta into the Presence of the Lord. The attending angel spoke saying, "This is the Redeemer. For thee in incarnation, He suffered. For thee without the gate treading the winepress alone, He expired." In

awe and trembling Marietta bowed before Him. The Lord, however, raised her up and welcomed her into the city of the redeemed.

Afterwards, she listened to the heavenly choir and was given an opportunity to meet some of her loved ones who had passed on before her. They freely conversed with her, and she found no difficulty in understanding them, for “thought moved with thought.” She saw in heaven there is no concealment.

She observed that her former acquaintances were happy souls contrasting with their careworn appearance before they left the earth. She saw no old age in Paradise. Marietta quickly came to the conclusion that the beauty and glory of heaven, as she had imagined it, was not wrong. “Be assured,” said the angel, “the highest thoughts of man fail to approach the reality and the delights of the heavenly scene.” Marietta was permitted to converse with other inhabitants of Paradise, and always, they were full of praise for their Redeemer. One in particular was chanting, “Oh, death where is thy sting? And grave thy victory now?” There is no sting of death for the believer, nor does the grave hold victory over those of Paradise.

Then she was shown, in the center of a great panorama, a descending cross. An angel spoke to her and said, “First learn that all heaven reveres the Cross. Before it myriads bow, and around it the redeemed delight to linger.” She was informed of the relationship of angels to those who lived on earth. Multitudes of guardian angels ministered to them and “no day, nor hour, nor moment passeth, but each mortal is watched by the spirit appointed to its charge.”

Marietta was also informed that the Second Coming of Christ was drawing near. At which time the redemption of the human race would take place. “Man’s redemption draweth nigh. Let angels swell the chorus; for soon the Savior descendedeth with holy attending angels.”

She was given a gentle reproof for the previous lack of faith and consecration and was admonished that, “there are no other means than those in Christ, the Redeemer, by which to attain inheritance in this blest abode.” She was also encouraged by the angel who said, “Be faithful then to the light given, and at last, thou shalt enjoy the bliss of heaven.”

The angel again discussed the Second Coming of Christ, and those who would attend “the reappearing of the Son of Man shall go forth on the day appointed, gathering together the elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”

Children In Paradise

Marietta observed that there were many children in Paradise. And this, of course, is in harmony with the Bible. When Jesus was on earth he took little children and blessed them saying, “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” The Scriptures do not go into detail as to what happens to the spirit of a child who dies, but we gather that its spirit is safely conveyed to Paradise to receive training and loving care by the guarding angels. The angel noted, “if man had not departed from purity and harmony, earth would have been a proper nursery for new-born spirits.” With sin coming into this world, death also entered, and children, rather than those who were older, were often its victims.

Marietta was told that each child on earth has a guardian angel. The Scriptures were quoted, “In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10). God beholds even the sparrow that falls to the ground, how much more those created in the image of God! As soon as the spirit of the little child leaves the body, its guardian angel conveys it safely to Paradise.

She was further informed that there was a city in Paradise called Infant Paradise. This city was set on a floral plain, in which there were flowers and birds that corresponded to those of the mortal world, although they were greatly superior. Paradise outside the City of Peace had the general aspect of what one might imagine the Garden of Eden had before sin entered the world.

Marietta was informed that when an angel bears an infant into Paradise, he classifies it according to its particular type of mind, its special gifts and assigns it to a home where it is best adapted. There are schools in Paradise, and there the infants are taught the lessons they were intended to have learned on earth, but in Paradise they are free from the defilements and vices of a fallen race.

She was told that if bereaved parents only realized the bliss and happiness of the child they had lost, they would no longer be overwhelmed with grief. After the children have completed their courses of instruction, Marietta was informed, they were moved upward to a higher sphere of learning.

Marietta was shown there are varied spheres of life in Paradise. Certain societies are more advanced spiritually and intellectually than others. This is quite in harmony with Paul’s revelation concerning life after the resurrection. Redeemed beings differ one from another as stars differ in glory. Yet there is a beautiful harmony between all inhabitants of Paradise regardless of their intellectual development.

She was told wicked spirits have a discordant nature that is out of harmony with the prevailing laws of Paradise. If they were to enter this holy region, they would suffer intense agony. Therefore, God, in His goodness, does not permit such spirits to mingle within the sphere of the righteous, but a great gulf is fixed between their respective abodes.

Christ And The Cross Is The Center Of Attraction In Heaven

When Jesus appears in Paradise, all other activity and occupation ceases, and the hosts of heaven gather in adoration and worship. At such times the newly arrived infants that have come to consciousness are assembled to behold the Savior and to adore the One Who has redeemed them.

When Marietta inquired if there was no heaven without the Cross, her angelic guide replied: The Cross is ever before the vision of the redeemed spirits. All instructions are based upon that blessed symbol of redeeming love, and it is the duty of the guardian angels to instruct the spirits of their charge, in the great truth of redemption, through Jesus, who suffered upon the Cross...the Cross and the sacrifice are imaged within their interior sense. All angels behold the Cross as it shines forth from the soul who has received its impression. It is because of this malicious spirits or beings cannot conceal their real nature from angels or the spirits of just men made perfect.

Marietta was shown many other things concerning the order and conditions within the children's Paradise. She observed the sublime architectural arrangement of the main city, and described it as unsurpassed loveliness. The city itself is divided into twelve main divisions by a river of living waters that flows in a spiral course. Twelve main avenues intersect this spiral. So, the city is divided into 144 great wards or divisions. Marietta describing it said, "The entire city appeared as one garden of flowers; one grove of umbrage; one gallery of sculptured imagery; one undulating sea of fountains; one unbroken extent of sumptuous architecture all set in a surrounding landscape of corresponding beauty, and overarched by a sky with hues of immortal light."

In contrast to earth, there is an absence or rivalry in heaven. The inhabitants dwell there in peace and perfect love. "I saw no rivalry or emulation. No desire for selfish glory existed in the lovely group of infants, but each group and the inhabitants of each nursery or palace were united in holy affection to the superior associate and more mature societies. Each little child was filled with holy love and desired to become advanced in holy wisdom so they could be used as an angel of light and loveliness."

Marietta Descends To The Realms Of Darkness

At this point, Marietta was informed she would be given a solemn object lesson. Suddenly, all the brightness departed, and she descended into the regions of darkness. In great fear she found herself plummeting downward into the deep abyss. There were flashes caused by the sulfur, and then, in the semidarkness, she saw floating about her "grim specters enveloped in the fires of unhallowed

passions.” She turned to seek refuge in the embrace of her guide, and lo, she found herself alone! She tried to pray, but couldn’t express herself. Remembering her unconsecrated life before leaving the world she exclaimed, “Oh, for one short hour on earth! If only I had more time or space, however brief, for preparation of soul and to secure fitness for the world of spirits.” In her despair she plunged farther into the nether darkness. Soon she discovered she was in the abode of the wicked who had died.

Here Marietta heard sounds of mingled import. There were bursts of laughter, utterances of revelry, of witty ridicule, polished sarcasm, obscene allusions and terrible curses. There was no water “to allay fierce and intolerable thirst.” The fountains and rivulets that appeared were only mirages. Fruitage that appeared on the trees burned the hand that plucked it. The very atmosphere carried the elements of wretchedness and disappointment.

While Marietta contemplated this fearful scene she was approached by a spirit whom she had known on earth. Accosting her, the spirit said:

“Marietta, we meet again. You see me a disembodied spirit in the abode where those who inwardly deny the Savior find their habitation when their mortal day has ended.

“My life on earth was suddenly brought to a close, and as I departed from the world, I moved rapidly in the direction prompted by my ruling desires. I desired to be courted, honored, admired – to be free to follow the perverted inclinations of my proud, rebellious and pleasure loving heart – a state of existence where all should be without restraint – and where every indulgence should be permitted to the soul – where religious instruction should find no place.

“With these desires I entered the spirit world, passed into the condition adapted to my inward state, rushed in haste to the enjoyment of the glittering scene which you now behold. I was welcomed as you have not been, for at once I was recognized as a fit associate of those who here abide. They do not welcome you for they discern in you a desire adverse to the passions which here prevail.

“I found myself endued with the power of strange and restless motion. I became conscious of a strange perversion of the brain, and cerebral organs became subject to a foreign power, which seemed to operate by absolute possession. I abandoned myself to the attractive influences that were around me, and sought to satisfy my cravings for pleasure. I reveled, I banqueted, I mingled in the wild and voluptuous dance. I plucked the shining fruit, I over indulged my nature with that which externally appeared delicious and inviting to sight and sense, but when tasted, all was loathsome and a source of increasing pain. The desires are so unnatural here and are ever increasing, so what I crave I loathe, and that which

delights, tortures. Every object about me appears to have a controlling power and domineers with cruel enchantment over my bewildered mind.

The Law Of Evil Attraction

“I experience the law of evil attraction. I am the slave of deceptive and discordant elements and their presiding vice. Every object in turn attracts me. The thought of mental freedom dies with the dying will, while the idea that I am a part and an element of the revolving fantasy takes possession of my spirit. By the strength of evil I am bound, and in it I exist.

The Result Of The Violated Law

“Marietta, I feel ‘tis vain to attempt to express our deplorable state. I often inquire, ‘is there no hope?’ And my sense replies, ‘How can harmony exist in the very midst of discord?’ We were advised of the consequences of our course while in the body, but we loved our way better than those that exalted the soul. We have fallen into this fearful abode. We have originated our sorrow. God is just. God is good. We know that it is not from the vindictive law of the Creator that we suffer. Marietta, it is our condition from which we receive the misery that we endure. The violation of the moral law, by which our moral natures should have been preserved in harmony and in health, is the prime cause of our state.

“Do you startle at these scenes? Know that all that moves around you is but the outer degree of deeper woe. Marietta, no good and happy beings abide with us. All within is dark. We sometimes dare to hope for redemption, still remembering the story of redeeming love, and we inquire, can that love penetrate this abode of gloom and death? May we ever hope to be made free from those desires and inclinations which bind us like chains and passions which burn like consuming fires in the unhallowed elements of this world of wretchedness?”

Marietta was quite overcome by this scene – and the realization of human recognition in Hades. Of this she wrote: “One hideous expression closed the scene; and being overcome – for I knew what I witnessed was real – I was immediately removed. Those spirits I had known on earth, and when I saw them there, I knew them still. Oh, how changed! They were the very embodiment to sorrows and remorse.”

Her angel guide, rejoining her, explained some of the things Marietta had witnessed, and added those who seek peace by any means other than the Cross shall ultimately experience dreadful disappointment.”

The angel also told her they who have Christ, shall never become a captive of that place of woe. “For every willing heart hath in heaven a mansion prepared. And who so seeks shall find the Lord a present help in time of need. Those thou hast seen are in the element they indulged in while in the body. As he who falls

from some dizzy height must bear the pain the wound imparts, even so he who lives and dies in sin receives the counterpart.”

The angel explained that God does not willingly send men to Hades. Marietta was told to weep not, because she had found her nature was not fully in harmony with heaven. “For a ransom is prepared in a healing fountain that thou mayest wash, by which all impurity of thy being may be moved. In this rejoice greatly since through great mercy, redemption is offered, and those who could not otherwise attain perfect joy are exalted from prison vaults to mansions in our Father’s Kingdom. For this grace the saints in heaven praise God, nor cease day or night to utter hymns of thanksgiving to Him who is their redeemer.”

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You that You love me. And, Father, show me step by step the plan You made for my life. I ask Your Son Jesus Christ to come into my life.

Friends, if you have not yet accepted Christ, take Him as your Savior now. Then, at death, your spirit will go to the place of the redeemed. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). I will continually thank You for

sins and to cleanse my life. sacrificing Your Son on the cross that I

Help me to follow You and Your might have eternal life with You

teaching others to Christ.

Protect me from Satan and evil. I await the return of Christ to take me to

Teach me to love my fellow man as You

acknowledge in the light of God’s Word that you are a sinner. Help me to love my fellow man as You

Necessary Steps To Salvation

Protect me from Satan and evil. I await the return of Christ to take me to

Teach me to love my fellow man as You

acknowledge in the light of God’s Word that you are a sinner. Help me to love my fellow man as You

2. REPENT: “But unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). You must see the awfulness of sin and then repent of it.

3. CONFESS: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). “With the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). Confess your sins to God.

4. FORSAKE: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord ... for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7). Sorrow for sin is not enough in itself. We must want to be done with it once and for all.

5. BELIEVE: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). Believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

6. RECEIVE: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,

even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:11, 12). Christ must be received personally into the heart by faith, if the experience of the New Birth is to be yours. (FGBMFI)

Now, if you will pray this prayer, it will help you to receive Jesus Christ into your soul and life:

How To Receive The Baptism In The Holy Spirit

1. You must be born again. This means to ask Jesus to forgive your sins, and then accept God’s forgiveness, knowing “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 3:23 and 10:13).

2. If now you have accepted Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit lives in you. John 14:7; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19.

3. The Holy Spirit is a Person and will speak for Himself if you allow Him to.

4. The Holy Spirit will use your lips, tongue and voice if you permit Him – just as when you speak in English.

5. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, in faith you must begin to do the speaking. Acts 2:4 says, “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and (they) began to speak.”

6. Receiving Christ as Savior required an act of faith. Healing results from an act of faith. Speaking in tongues takes an act of faith.

7. When in faith you begin to speak in tongues, the Holy Spirit will give the utterance – the words to say. That’s where the supernatural comes in.

8. Every believer is commanded to “be filled with the Spirit,” Ephesians 5:18, even Jesus’ mother, Mary, and His flesh and blood brothers. James, Joses, Simon and Judas (Matthew 13:55), (Acts 1:14) and His disciples received (Acts 2:4). Receiving the Holy Spirit is not an option.

9. Relax. “This is the rest ...” Isaiah 28:12

10. The Holy Spirit is a gift. Acts 8:20; 2:38, 39; 11:17; Luke 11:13. You don’t beg or work for a gift. You just receive it.

11. Begin each day by praying in the Spirit to edify yourself – it’s like charging your spiritual batteries. 1 Corinthians 14:4, 18.

12. Receive now, by worshipping Jesus in your heart and speaking forth in faith in the unknown tongues as the Holy Spirit in you provides the words.

LIFE AFTER DEATH - ENGLISH



CHRIST FOR THE NATIONS