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[Vol. I.

J. LITCH, NO. 41 ARCADE, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TO THE READER.

The question discussed in these pages is not *willingly* approached. Only a deep sense of duty to God and man, could induce an attempt to meet in discussion a *friend* and *brother* whom I highly respect—but who yet, as I believe, is wrong in the position he occupies on this question. Nor do I believe the error to be one of small magnitude. The doctrines of the total unconsciousness of man in death, especially when it includes that being “WHO MADE ALL THINGS,” “AND BY WHOM ALL THINGS CONSIST,”—that being who “IS THE WORD,” and “WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD,” and “WAS GOD,”—that being “IN WHOM DWELT ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY;”—When I am told that this being, for three days and three nights was in profound and unconscious sleep—I cannot refrain myself and be honest towards God and man. I have felt myself called upon by all that is dear to a Christian’s heart, to speak out in language that cannot be misunderstood. I believe the doctrine, if carried out, subversive of the whole Christian system.

I know many who now believe the doctrine of the soul’s unconsciousness would be horrified if they thought it would reduce Christ to a mere creature; but much more so, if they saw, *as it actually does*, that it must deny his PRE-EXISTENCE. I ask my dear brethren to stop and look before they go further—read these pages attentively—pray over the subject—read God’s word with a prayerful heart, and may God in mercy grant his Holy Spirit to lead us into truth.

I have thrown the subject into a conversational form, because I could present it more distinctly and familiarly than in another form. I have given my opponent a chance to speak more fully than could have been done in an ordinary review. It will be seen in the discussion on ANNIHILATION, that the *immortality* of the wicked is denied, while the *eternal perpetuity* of their being is maintained.

I wish the reader to understand that I have not entered this warfare hastily, without counting the cost—but deliberately—understandingly. I know from experience that an indulgence of such sentiments, however plausible and beautiful at the first, will just as surely and naturally reduce our estimate of Christ, as darkness follows an eclipse, or the setting of the sun. I warn and intreat the reader to beware, and before he goes further to look well at the issue, the final issue. I have written plainly, but in love.

I dare not keep silence and hear it taught to sinners, that all is silence and

unconsciousness in death, and that in the resurrection they will only awake to go into nonentity. If others dare take such a fearful responsibility as to tell them "eternal fire" and "eternal punishment," will only be a temporary pain! let them do it for themselves. I warn the reader from the Lord's mouth, that the wicked "shall go away into eternal punishment." The Lord have mercy on the reader, and open his eyes before it is too late, if he is resting on the hope of going out of being.

The principle of interpretation adopted by Bro. S. in his interpretation of the story of the rich man and Lazarus, if correct, will make the Bible just what the GERMAN NEOLOGISTS make of it. There is scarcely a more barefaced and palpable specimen of Neology to be found than that same exposition of Luke xvi. 19, 31. Adopt the principles he there assumes and practices upon, and there is an end to faith in the testimony of Scripture, however plain and simple the narrative. I speak not at random when I say thus—I speak from sad experience—from a knowledge of the effect which one such violation of plain and obvious rules of Biblical interpretation has on our whole course of reasoning on scriptural subjects. I beg the reader to stop, if he inclines to the sentiment, and look at that exposition, and ask himself if that is the reasoning of Geo. Storrs, the Adventist? Does he deal thus with God's most holy word, where he has a solid foundation!

J. L.

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INTERMEDIATE STATE.

CONVERSATION ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATE, BETWEEN J. LITCH
AND GEO. STORRS.

I.—Has Man a Soul or Spirit?

J. L. Good morning, Brother S. I am happy to meet you, particularly as I have some difficulties in my mind upon a question in which, at present, you take a deep interest; I mean the intermediate state of the dead. It is a maxim with me to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." This question has not been with me a matter of indifference. I have in years past taken a deep interest in it, and studied it until my mind came to a settled conclusion that a part of a living man still exists when the other part goes to the dust as it was. If, however, you have any new light on this question, I shall be happy to review the whole matter, and if I see cause to change my views, I shall most certainly do so.

G. S. "I consider the intermediate state of the dead to be a topic of some importance, as upon a proper understanding of this subject depends, in a great measure, correct views of the resurrection of the dead; for, it must be manifest that if only a *part* of man dies, there can be no resurrection of *man*, only in part; but, do the Scriptures countenance any other idea than that *the whole man* is raised from the dead?"—*Bible Examiner*, No. 9, p. 3.

J. L. True, it is important to understand what death is, and I shall be happy to hear your definition of it.

G. S. "I shall endeavor to show, from the Scriptures of truth, that the *whole man*, whatever are his component parts, suffers privation of life, in what we call death.

"Turn to the account of man's creation, Gen. ii. 7. '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.' God said to this man, this 'living soul,' without excepting any part of him, 'But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Or, as the margin reads, 'Dying THOU shalt die.' What part of man is excepted in this denunciation? Surely no part. To say, the *mind*, which was principal in the offence, was exempt from death, is an absurdity; or, to make its death to be no more than a state of unhappiness, in my judgment, is doing violence to the testimony of God. That unhappiness was involved, as a consequence of sin, is admitted; but, that that was *the penalty* for transgression is denied. The penalty is *death*. In explaining the penalty God himself says to man, Gen. iii. 19, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the *ground*; for out of it wast THOU taken: for dust thou art, and *unto dust* shalt thou return.' Compare this with Job vii. 21, 'For now shall I *sleep in the dust*,' &c. And the angel says to Daniel, chap. xii. 2, 'Many of them that *sleep in the dust of the earth* shall awake,' &c. It was to the *whole man* that his Maker said, 'Dying thou shalt die;' and at death there is a cessation of all consciousness, as truly as that man had no consciousness before his creation: if it were not so it would not be death, but only a change in the mode of man's life."—*Ibid.* p. 4.

which was principal in the offence, was exempt from death, is an absurdity. Or to make its death nothing more than a state of unhappiness, in my judgment, is doing violence to the testimony of God. That unhappiness was involved as a consequence of sin, is admitted; but, that that was the penalty for transgression, is denied."

You say death is the *penalty* on the whole man; that death is unconsciousness, utter unconsciousness. Yet unhappiness is a *consequence* of sin. Can unconsciousness be unhappy? Who most effectually evades the punishment or penalty—those who say death separates the spirit from the body, and one returns to God, to be unhappy, and leaves the other in the dust?—or those who say both go to dust and sleep, and evade all unhappiness, "the *consequence* of sin?" I see you are unwilling to admit that man has a spirit separate from the body, but yet you are obliged to admit it. You want to make the whole man, every part of him, sleep in the dust, and yet you cannot do it, and you know it cannot be done. It is attempted by brother PICKANDS in his letter to you, to make out the whole being of man goes to the dust. He says, "Again, the Bible account of man's departure out of this life, strictly accords with this representation of the soul, as the breath, life, another name for the man, &c. 'The Bible represents *man* as actually returning to the earth from which he was taken.'" And then he gives eleven texts of Scripture to prove it. Now does he, and do you, by that passage, mean that there is no spirit that goes to God? Do you and he mean to say, that when Stephen saw the glory of heaven, and Jesus on the right hand of God, and asked him to receive his spirit, that that spirit only went to the dust? "*He fell asleep.*" Did his spirit go to Christ, to God, or did it do just as it does when the body ordinarily sleeps?—that is, just suspend its action for the physical organs to rest?

G. S. By *J. D. Pickands, Bible Reader, February 9, 1844.* "If the soul be a distinct being, or existence residing in the body, and capable of living out of the body, then how does it get into the body?"

J. L. If you will tell me how the soul of the widow's son, 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22, come into him, I will answer your question. But I will now tell you *where* it comes *from*. It comes from God, and returns to God who gave it. Eccl. xii. 7. It has an existence separate from the body, for that child's soul was out, and came in "*again.*" It had been there before, and came *again*. The truth is, the great mass of instances in which the term *soul* is used, as cited by brother Pickands, show the soul to be a distinct thing from the body."

G. S. "But do the Scriptures countenance any other idea than that *the whole man* is raised from the dead? *Bible Examiner, No. 9, p. 3.*

J. L. Certainly they do. 2 Kings viii. 5. They give countenance, also, to the idea which you have conceded, that the spirit

which returns to God at death, will be reunited to the body in the resurrection. In that sense the whole man will be raised.

2. Can the soul or spirit be conscious out of the body?

Having now settled the question by a mutual concession, that the living man has two parts, a body composed of dust, which returns to dust, and a "life," "breath," "soul," or "spirit," which at the same time returns to God who gave it, we will, if you please, next proceed to the inquiry, "CAN that "life," "soul," "breath," or "spirit," which goes to God, be conscious out of the body?" I wish you now to understand me. I do not here inquire, are they actually conscious while out of the body? But CAN they be?

The first evidence I shall produce on this point is 2 Cor. xii. 2—4. "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) and such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

If Paul had believed it utterly impossible to know anything out of the body, and yet knew the fact that in some way he was in "Paradise," "the third heaven," that he saw and heard there; he certainly could not have been uncertain whether in the body or out. If he could only hear, see, and know, in the body, he must have been in the body.

G. S. "In reply, I might say, If Paul had believed in a conscious state after life had become extinct, and that the spirit of man exists separate from the body in a sensible state, 'he would have supposed that he *must* have been' out of the body, and of course would have expressed no doubts on the subject. But his expression, I apprehend, only indicates that the revelation was made in such a manner as that *man* could not explain it."—*Bible Examiner*, No. 9, p. 13.

J. L. My dear brother, this is not the way you are accustomed to meet your opponents on subjects where you have solid ground. Your reply, in my estimation, is most puerile. Look at it again; candidly. Paul knew a man caught up to *paradise*. He did not know but he might be in the body, he did not know but he might be out of the body? He was *conscious* there. If it was a settled doctrine with the apostle that the *spirit* out of the body is entirely unconscious, *must he not have known* that he must have been in the body? But it by no means follows that if he had known or believed in a conscious state, after life had become extinct, and the spirit separate from the body, that "he would have supposed he must have been out of the body." Where are your premises for such a conclusion? Could he not have been conscious in the body, if that went? Certainly, you will not deny it. Then he might know either in or out of the body. Your answer does not meet the case at all. If it can be met, and disposed of on your hypo-

ment is, that man has no spirit capable of consciousness, out of the body. If it was susceptible of it, there would be a possibility that it might be conscious. So if there was a possibility of any part of Christ being conscious out of the body, it is not certain but that part remained conscious even when Christ was dead. But if it existed once in consciousness, it might again. Therefore, if pressed, you will be *driven* to the necessity of denying his *pre-existence*. **WILL YOU RUSH ON SUCH A POSITION?**

I want this understood. **I DO CHARGE THE DOCTRINE YOU HAVE ADVANCED RELATIVE TO DEATH, ESPECIALLY THE DEATH OF CHRIST, WITH LEADING DIRECTLY AND LEGITIMATELY, FIRST, TO A DENIAL OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, AND, SECONDLY, TO A DENIAL OF HIS PRE-EXISTENCE.**

3. Some part of man is conscious in death.

G. S. "The wages of sin, and the penalty of the law, is *death*. And that which introduces us into a state, in which, we 'know more than all the world,' as it is said, often, of a man when he dies, cannot be death, but a far superior life. I conclude, the Scripture testimony is true—'*the dead know not any thing*.' If I am called an '*infidel*' for 'that be it so.'—*Bible Ex. No. 9, p. 13.*

J. L. So do I conclude that "the scripture testimony is true," that "*the dead know not any thing*." I also conclude that it is true that some part of the Saviour went to paradise while he was dead, and that the thief who sought his grace, went there with him that *very day*, as Christ promised. But you say, "Jesus told Mary, three days after, '*I am not yet ascended to my Father*.' So *then*, the thief could not have been in paradise with Christ before our Lord himself had ascended." To this I reply, no one pretends he had ascended in his body as our high priest and advocate, because that was in the tomb. But it does not follow that the Father did not receive his spirit, which Christ commended to him. Do you deny that Christ's spirit, or the thief's, went to God who gave them?

"*I conclude it is true*" that Lazarus did die, and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. That he was there comforted. And then Abraham, too, must have been in comfort. I also "conclude" that "the rich man died and was buried, and in **HELL**, (*hades*, a word never used to signify the place of the wicked after they are raised, for that is *Gehenna*, into which soul and body are to be put and destroyed. Hades is the place of the dead, good or bad,) he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom."

G. S. "The case of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi, is supposed to form an insurmountable objection to the theory of the sleep of the dead. I admit there are difficulties in this text, but the difficulties are not so great to harmonize this with the unconscious state of the dead, previous to the resurrection, as to harmonize the common theory with the mass of Scripture testimony that the dead are asleep—that they 'know not anything,' &c. We will now examine this case.

"By facts as well as parables the Bible communicates instruction. In order to a right understanding of the speaker or writer, we should first inquire what was the object in view, or the instruction intended to be imparted. This we

can only learn from the text, context, and comparing it with other portions of revelation.

"There appear to have been several points intended to be impressed upon the people, by our Saviour, in the text now under consideration; and the instruction is the same whether it be considered a parable or history of facts. We will try to bring out some of the principal points that appear in this text—and

"1. *It seems designed to show the folly and danger of trusting in riches.* The changeableness of the affairs of this life had been shown in the first part of this chapter; they had also been cautioned to make a right use of things of this world, and told that they could 'not serve God and Mammon.' The Pharisees, who were covetous, derided him, i. e. laughed at him, mocked him, and turned what he said to ridicule. Our Saviour, after rebuking them, enforces what he had said, by introducing two persons, viz: a Rich man and a Poor man. Look at them—

"*The Rich man* was finely clothed—had expensive and splendid food. This was his constant fare "every day"—no reverse seems to have attended him. He was what most men would call a genteel liver; living in good style, a prosperous and happy man. But, mark. He dies—is buried in splendor, no doubt—but, the next he finds of himself, he is in 'torments.' His riches, splendor, sumptuous fare, and rich dresses have all, all fled. Who does not see in his case the danger of riches and the folly of trusting in them. But the picture is made more striking by introducing

"*The Poor man.*—He had no home—no food—doubtless poorly clothed, covered with 'sores;' instead of many physicians, he had 'dogs' to be his medical aid. But, mark—he dies; how he was buried we are not told, or whether it was done at all. The next he finds of himself he is unspeakably 'comforted;' his poverty—his sores—his 'evil things' have passed away for ever. Who does not see, in a clear light, the dangerous tendency of worldly possessions? Few persons can have them, without indulging in an extravagance in dress, equipage, and food, which is ruinous to their souls; or, which is equally fatal, making their happiness to consist in contemplating the largeness of their earthly treasures.

"I consider this to be the main point designed to be illustrated—the folly and danger of seeking our good in this life. There are other points, viz:

"2. To expose the deception common among the Jews, that they should be saved because they were the children of 'Abraham.'

"3. That this life is the only time to secure salvation—and the certainty of perishing without hope, if this period is neglected.

"4. The sufficiency of the means now employed to turn men to God—and hence the folly of supposing that some other means would be more effectual. Men would not be 'persuaded though one rose from the dead.'

"It does by no means follow, if we admit that that discourse is not a parable, that the rich man or Lazarus were conscious *immediately* after death; nor at all till the resurrection. The apostle Paul tells us, Rom. iv. 17, that 'God calls those things that are *not* as though they were.' That is, things not yet in actual existence are seen by him, and spoken of as though they now existed, or were already passed. I might give many examples of this. Isaiah says of Christ—'He *was* wounded—he *was* bruised—the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him—he *was* despised,' &c.; and yet those things were not *actually* done for more than seven hundred years afterwards. Daniel *saw* the little horn making war with the saints—and he *saw* the judgment set; and yet those things were hundreds or thousands of years in the future at the very time when the representation of them was presented to the mind.

"To me, it seems clear that the rich man is spoken of in his resurrection state. First, because the Scriptures declare—'The dead *know not any thing.*' Eccl. ix. 5. And they also declare, that in the day of their death '*Their thoughts perish.*' Ps. cxlvi. 4. If it be said that these texts only mean their