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Should Christians Accept Blood Transfusions To Save Life?

IN taking up this subject we do so without any thought of criticizing the opinions of others in matters personal or relating to conscience. Our object is wholly to seek to determine from the Scriptures what the Lord would expect from us as His followers now that we are living in a day when such things as blood transfusions are common and everyday performances in all the large hospitals of the world. You realize that it is a very common matter now for one to receive a blood transfusion, and appeals are going out continually for people to make donations of blood for the benefit of those in need.

In the days of our Lord and the Apostles, such scientific attainments in the medical world as blood transfusions were absolutely out of the question, and we cannot expect to find any direct statements on such matters recorded in the Bible, but there are Scriptures which do help us in a general way to arrive at right conclusions in matters which are not especially revealed in so many words in the Bible.

One of these Scriptures is found in 2 Tim. 1:7—"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and a sound mind." True followers of the Lord surely desire to have a sound mind about all they seek to do for the Master, and this promise of the Apostle Paul's is just as applicable today as when he wrote those words to Timothy—that is to those who have truly given their hearts and lives in full consecration. Again, we have Phil. 4:5. "Let your moderation be known to all men." The meaning of the Greek word from which our English word "moderation" is translated carries the thought of "appropriate", or "reasonable." "Let your reasonableness or appropriateness be known to all men." In other words, do not be extremists so far as the world's affairs are concerned. Rather, the Lord's people are to be in the world, but not of the world, seeking to be reasonably minded and having the spirit of a sound mind.

We know that one of the greatest deceptions of the Adversary is to try to influence the Lord's people in one extreme or the other. An example is the theory of eternal torment as proclaimed by some for the majority of the human race. Then on the other extreme we have the theory of universal salvation proclaimed by others, who claim that God is too loving to destroy any of the human family. Both these teachings are unscriptural. We read in Ps. 145:20 that "all the wicked will God destroy", and know that this will mean destruction for those who are not worthy of life when they have been fully tested and wilfully reject the love of God. They are not going to be allowed to interfere with the progress and blessing of others who do wish to serve the Lord in every respect. So the sound mind of the Christian agrees with this procedure in God's dealing with the human family as being in keeping with His attributes of justice, love, mercy and power, whereas the erroneous teachings of eternal torment and universal salvation are at once discerned by the Christian's mind to be of the Adversary. They are not in accord with God's character. That is one way we can test any teaching. Is it like God? When we see the wonderful plan of God in all its glory, we cannot help saying, "It is just like God." Those who will not accept the grace of God after knowing fully and wilfully rejecting it, must be destroyed. "Nothing shall hurt or destroy" in all the Lord's Kingdom. He will not have anyone interfere with the desire of other living creatures to obey and serve Him.

Another verse in connection with our subject is found in Acts 17:26. This verse is from that wonderful sermon Paul gave on Mars Hill. He delivered to the Athenians there a wonderful sermon indeed. In v. 26 he says, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." This is a very important point, especially in respect of colour discrimination. We find in this enlightened twentieth century, white people having some kind of a grudge against dark-coloured people, even in so-called Christian nations. Yet we read here in the Bible that God hath made of one blood all nations of men.

While there are different blood groups, the colour of the skin should provide no objection to anyone willing to accept a blood transfusion. Let us 'suppose that there are four or five main blood groups amongst people of each colour of skin. It will be seen that the blood of a dark man or woman of the same grouping as a white person would be much more suitable for that white person than that from other white people of different blood groups.

Now there are two main classes of people who feel that the giving or receiving of blood transfusions would be improper. Firstly, there is the class who objects mainly because they feel that the blood of some people would likely be impure. We have heard people put it this way, Take people who smoke or take alcohol freely. Surely their blood would not be pure and clean. So for health reasons some seem to think it would be improper to receive blood of uncertain purity. While being uninformed as to the processes of keeping blood in the blood bank, surely in this day of increased knowledge it would not be difficult to remove any likely impurity from blood received from people who had made donations of their blood. A little investigation should be all that is necessary on the part of those who object to blood transfusions for health reasons.

An illustration may help here. Those who have been on dairy farms and have seen the separating process of milk will know one thing that is most surprising. The milking machines are on the cows, and the milk is not touched by human hand at all, but is in the pipes right through the machinery and runs immediately into the separator, and the cream and milk are separated. The amount of sediment in the separator is the most surprising thing. Where does it come from? A considerable amount of sediment is obtained from milk which you would think would be absolutely pure. We use this illustration because some years ago in an advertisement for blood donors in the city, there was shown a separator for separating blood. In regard to the milk, it has been suggested that by using separated milk and then bringing it back to the appropriate richness with cream, it is much purer than if it had not been taken through the separator. In the same way, blood can be cleansed and made quite pure for the use of blood transfusions. Possibly there are more recent processes in this art than the one mentioned. We have simply used the illustration to show that there should be no question of people feeling that for health reasons they could not accept a blood transfusion.

A second class of people object to accepting blood transfusions for themselves or their families on the ground of conscience, feeling that certain Scriptures infer that accepting blood would be contrary to the Lord's instructions.

It is quite right that our consciences should be our guide in the Christian way, so long as the conscience is correctly adjusted, shall we say, to the precepts of God's Word. The Apostle Paul's words in Acts 24:16 are appropriate—"Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." This is a wonderful condition of heart to be in. He would exercise his heart and mind to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. The same Apostle informs us of some whose consciences would not be a true guide,

— we refer to 1 Tim. 4:2. This is a class who the Apostle says "have their consciences seared with a hot iron". In other words, they had drifted away from the Truth, and their consciences would be no longer a true guide. They could be quite wrong. That is why we say our consciences must be regulated by the Word of God; the principles that go to make up the character of God, along with His Word in our hearts, must be the test as to whether our conscience is dictating to us correctly in respect of any matter regarding ourselves or our families. So it is not sufficient to say, My conscience tells me so and so is correct and proper. It must be true, according to the principles of God's Word.

The "Manna" comment for November 24th gives us a good thought—"Our consciences require regulating, as do all the other features of our fallen nature. If our consciences are to be regulated we must have some standard by which to set and regulate them. The conscience is like a watch whose dial is properly marked with the hours, but whose correctness as a timekeeper depends upon the proper regulating of its mainspring, so that it may point out the hours truthfully; so our consciences are ready to indicate right and wrong to us, but they can only be relied upon to tell us truly what is right and what is wrong after being regulated in connection with the new mainspring, the new heart, the pure will, brought into full harmony with the law of love, as presented to us in the Word of God."

It seems that is most important in connection with our subject. Our consciences must be regulated in accord with the Word of God.

Now let us examine some Scriptures which are used to imply that blood transfusions are improper for human beings. Firstly we have Gen. 9:4 as a text that is used in this connection. After the Flood in Noah's day he was given instructions in regard to eating. "Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, ye shall not eat." This instruction was given to Noah, and intended, of course, for his family and all mankind since that time. The Lord would have his people know they must not eat flesh with the blood in it.

Another instruction was given to Israel some considerable time after Noah's day—Lev. 17:10,11. "Whatsoever man

there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for the soul; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” Then in Lev. 19:26 we have a plain statement, “Ye shall not eat anything with the blood.” Deut. 12:16,23—“Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water. . . . Only be sure that thou eat not the blood; for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.”

Those instructions given to Israel were most important. They were strict. There could be no excuse for the Israelites to be misinformed in regard to this important instruction from the Lord to abstain from eating the blood of animals God had given them for food. There seems to be good reason for the Lord’s strict prohibition of Israel eating blood.

We read in Lev. 17:11 “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls.” Did the blood of the animals really make atonement for the Israelites? We answer, only in a typical sense. The atonement made by the blood pointed forward to the real atonement which would be made for Adam, by Jesus’ blood. In every instance where the reference is to the blood making atonement, it is in the typical sense of looking forward to the real sacrifice for sins.

Heb. 9:22,23 gives us this most important lesson very clearly. “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” Under the law of Moses, the Lord made provision whereby Israel could be typically cleansed for twelve months ahead by the sacrificing of the bullock and the goat on the Day of Atonement, by following those instructions and sprinkling the blood. They were then accounted clean in the sight of God. That was intended to keep them a separated people. By repeating this sacrifice of the animals every year, it reminded them, of course, that this was only a type. The repetition showed it was not actually accomplishing the redemption, but that it was picturing what would be done by the real sacrifice of Christ Jesus in due time. It was necessary for these animals to be actually slain and the blood sprinkled. But the heavenly things themselves had better sacrifices. The real sacrifice for sins was accomplished by much better sacrifices than animals, even the blood of Christ Jesus Himself.

We remember the offerings of Cain and Abel to the Lord. They had a mind to commune with the Lord, and offered sacrifices to Him. We see that the desire to worship the Creator was not obliterated by the fall. Gen. 4:3,4—“And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain he had not respect.” Abel was in tune with the Lord and was able to grasp what the Lord would desire, so his offering was acceptable to the Lord. Cain being an agricultural man, thought he would bring the firstfruits of his fields, but the Lord did not respect him. It was not a fitting type, it did not point forward to the blood of Christ, and so was not accepted. Cain was wroth. Vengeance came into his heart. We see the spirit of the Adversary coming in, and Cain slew his brother because of revenge. What a dreadful condition in the first generation! But the point is that God had respect unto Abel’s offering because it was an offering of blood. The blood pictured, then, the blood of Christ that would take away the sins of the world. We have repeatedly in the Old Testament the illustration of the value God placed on the blood of the animals, and that which He impressed on the hearts and minds of Israel, was that it pictured in reality the real Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

It was necessary first of all that those types be purged with blood, and God arranged that the types should be made with animal sacrifices; that the patterns or pictures of things in the heavens should be purified with those animal sacrifices. But the heavenly things themselves had better sacrifices, even the blood of Christ Himself. We see, then, that as the blood of bulls and goats pointed forward to the blood of Jesus Christ, God attached great sacredness to animal blood, and did not want the Israelites to consider it a common or ordinary food. The blood of animals was sacred, and would impress the great value of the real atonement blood of Jesus on the minds of all Israel, who were God’s Covenant people. There can be no doubt that the impression would be conveyed that if the blood of animals is precious, how much more precious would be the blood of Christ, that actually cleanses and takes away the sin of all mankind, and will give life from the dead to all who would accept the sacrifice when given the opportunity.

It may be asked, What relationship is there between God’s prohibition of eating the blood of animals and the matter of receiving blood transfusions? In the first place, God’s command had to do with the blood of animals only, and the prohibition was against the taking of blood into the digestive organs, eating it. In the case of blood transfusions, no animal blood is used, and human blood is not taken into the digestive organs, but transferred to the blood stream of the patient. There seems no ‘real similarity, and we know of no Scripture which would give the slightest indication that blood transfusions for Christians should be rejected. We know of no Scriptures at all that would seem to imply they should not be accepted. There does not seem to be any similarity in the prohibition against eating animal blood and receiving human blood by patients who are gravely in need of some sustaining source to prolong their human life.

In New Testament times, when Gentiles were received into the early Church, a situation arose which called for a special presentation from the Apostles, and this is found in Acts 15:19,20. God's covenant people were a prepared people, and their hearts were being trained; the Law was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. If they had been obedient people, they might have been able to enter the Heavenly calling and become the Bride class. But when they rejected Christ, God called for the Gospel to go the Gentiles. Cornelius was the first Gentile convert to be received into God's favour, and was granted the opportunity to become one of the sons of God. About 31- years after Pentecost we find that the Gentiles who were becoming interested in the Lord's teachings through the ministry of the Apostles, had been associated with the customs of heathen nations; and many of those customs were abhorrent to the Jews, and to people today. Some would have been partaking of blood in their heathen revelries. Some coming into the Church would bring with them a certain amount of their former life. Their minds would have to be helped in the way the Lord would want them to walk now they were becoming Christians. So there was a necessary presentation given by the Apostles as to what the Gentiles should be expected to subscribe to in regard to their Christian conduct. The Jews, of course, would try to enforce some things that were not necessary on the Gentiles. They had been used to form and ceremony, and now, while accepting Christ, they would want to continue some of those ceremonies, which now would not be necessary at all. In other words, when the Lord invites His followers He does not say, Thou shalt do this and thou shalt do that, but He appeals to their hearts and minds. He gives them a sound mind by His spirit.

So Christians arrive at conclusions not because they are servants as they were under the law of Moses, but they are brought into God's family as sons, and that makes the relationship very much more intimate. A man in business brings his son into the business arrangements and makes his son an associate. The father and son now co-operate in the business so differently to the servants. The son may stay behind for an hour or two, with the interests of the business in mind, and there are no restrictions. There is a liberality and oneness of mind. Just so, Christians are given the spirit of a sound mind, and want more and more to do the things the Heavenly Father would have them do, just like Jesus Himself. He "learned (proved) obedience ,by the things He suffered". He always obeyed God, and as He said, "I know Thou hearest me always". He always most lovingly did the Father's will.

When the Gentiles were coming in with their Jewish compatriots they would have to eliminate some of those baser things they were associated with in the heathen customs. So the Apostles came together to say what would be essential. And this is what is written in Acts 15:19,20—"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." The Gentile Christians would be delighted to conform to the main principles, shall we say, to which the Christian life must be directed.

Yes, but strangely enough that instruction from the Apostle of "abstaining from blood" is taken by some, conscientiously they say, to refer to human blood for the purpose of blood transfusions. Comparing Scripture with Scripture we can see that what the Apostles would mean would be to abstain from eating animal blood. Something strangled would not be bled. We cannot take any other interpretation than this. It is a plain direction, that as God told Israel over and over again that they were not to eat blood, so these Gentile Christians were having the subject presented to them, that they should abstain from things strangled, and from blood. In the majority of cases it would be abhorrent to them and they would not think of doing it anyway. But the Apostles were not going to lay any other burdens on the Gentile Christians. They knew that as Christians they would receive more and more of the spirit of the Lord, and come more and more into accord with the law of love; for the Christian life calls for the laying down of the human life, laying it down in service of God in as direct a way as possible. Also in an indirect way, because all that the Christian does is a service unto the Lord. The Apostle says, Even if you eat or drink, do it to the glory of God. That is a great help to us. We would not eat or drink anything to bring dishonour to the Lord's name. Especially would we refrain from blood. This blood in the minds of Israel was very sacred. The animals' blood pictured the blood of Christ, given to make atonement for sins; in addition, of course, to being absolutely unhealthy to be partaken of. God gave it that sacred touch so they would realise it was pointing to the sacrifice of Christ. These restrictions could be clearly understood in the Apostles' day. How any Christian could interpret this to include blood transfusions is very difficult to understand. There seems no connection.

In the case of children under the care of parents or guardians, it would be a great responsibility to deny any little ones a blood transfusion if it would likely save their life. Perhaps parents and guardians need to remember that the children under their care are first of all God's little ones, and would need to be sustained by every reasonable and possible means at their disposal; and even if they rejected a blood transfusion for themselves because of conscience, they should think more than once, they should think very, very deeply in respect of their children. God has given all parents their little ones to sustain under every reasonable circumstance, to sustain their life while there is hope. We would say that even if anyone felt that he himself could not take a blood transfusion, the principle should not be applied to others under his care. The necessity for conscience to be regulated by God's Word is very essential.

It may not be out of place to mention a suggestion put forward in a recent Coroner's Court by an assisting Counsel. We do not know whether he would be a professing Christian, but it would be a very wise and helpful suggestion—that, say in the case of infants, perhaps a few hours old, where the parents felt they could not agree to a blood transfusion, the Counsel suggested that there should be an appeal made to some overriding authority such as the Child Welfare Department; to some body of people who have given their lives to assisting in the welfare of children. That would relieve the parents' own conscience in respect of this matter, inasmuch as in objecting, their conscience would be clear, but the authority could give a ruling and instruct the hospital to go ahead and save the life of the infant. That seemed a reasonable suggestion, because some consciences undoubtedly can become twisted, and by not sustaining the life of one given into their care, or not allowing others to sustain that life, they could be giving a very wrong judgment, and in later life they may have much to learn that could be avoided by a little more wisdom and a rightly-regulated conscience in the matter.

We mention in passing that even in men of the world, sometimes there is wisdom that should be appreciated, that is in respect of natural things. We realize that there is a belief in the hearts of some that if a refusing of a blood transfusion results in death, there will still be a resurrection; but that does not fulfil the obligations of a parent or guardian. We should not take the position of saying, If the child cannot live without a blood transfusion I cannot take the responsibility of agreeing to it, for even if it does die it will be resurrected. That is not God's way. Life must be preserved by every reasonable and possible means. God wants His children to realize that life is precious. The few short years *we* have are very precious to us. During this time we may have the opportunity, by the Lord's grace, of being invited to the heavenly- inheritance, something which could never be gained by anyone if he did not live long enough. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a person may have his life sustained by wonderful medical science, and grow up and be invited by the Lord to become a member of His heavenly kingdom. Sometimes we might feel that a life is, as it were, hanging on a thread; but to save a life and have the opportunity of the High Calling **is one of the** greatest privileges that anyone can receive from the Lord. For God to pass over even the angels and condescend to invite human beings to such an inheritance is a marvel beyond our thoughts.

Another matter of great importance for all Christians is to see that they do not agree with and obey any injunction of any church or organisation simply because it is put out by such a church or organisation; that we do not agree with or subscribe to anything because it comes from headquarters. The regimentation of the Lord's people seems to have been a great temptation all down through the age. If you look at church history you will find the Papacy ruled with a rod of iron, and made decrees as to what people should believe, and those who dared to contradict were slaughtered. What a dreadful system of iniquity was instigated under the direction of the great Adversary. We are thankful it is not so today; but nevertheless there are similar efforts along these lines, to regiment beliefs, prepare tables or creeds of what people should believe when they belong to a particular church or organisation.

When we come into the church of Christ we come into the liberty of the sons of God. God gives us His spirit, and teaches us by His spirit, and we have the spirit of a sound mind as we progress along the way; by comparing Scripture with Scripture we learn right from wrong. We will act becomingly in His sight. When the Lord sent out the Apostles, He said, Be not concerned about what you will say when brought before governors and kings. The spirit of the Father will **tell you what to** say. So in regard to the truths of the Bible. We are not to try to regiment one another. Organisations must not do so. If they do, they are not of the Lord. If there is any effort along that line, then far better to be away from such organisations or churches.

The Lord's people need to learn that they gain the Lord's approval by being individual Christians, exercised in their own minds from the Bible as to its meaning, and the truth or otherwise of any teaching put out by any church or organisation. The Lord did not call people because they belonged to any organisation. He called individuals. He called them in twos by the seaside. He did not say, To what 'organization do you belong? No; but "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He knew they needed to be instructed. So it is with all of us. We are learning in the school of Christ day by day. As we preserve our humility and meekness and desire to be instructed along the lines of the Lord's Word, we will find it is a very happy condition in spite of the narrowness. There are multitudes associated together in some movements. It is quite an experience to be with a multitude. Some people feel that numbers make strength, and that they are all the more secure if they are surrounded by numbers. But not so in the Lord's family. It is one here and there, comparatively speaking.

So in answer to our question, we will say we know of no Scripture which can be rightly taken to prohibit anyone accepting the benefits of a blood transfusion if they are in need of it. Our hospitals today do not give transfusions for the fun of it. They do not do it to experiment. All the experimenting to save life in this way has been done years ago.

It seems that for one to refuse for themselves it would be their own responsibility, but to refuse another human being under their care would be a very grave injustice. Such an one perhaps has much to learn, and by the Lord's grace they may be able to learn, too, if not in this life, then in the life to come.

We could just briefly refer to the wonderful kingdom of God, when all minds will be cleared of obscurity, the veil taken away from all faces, the misconceptions and superstitions removed. The kingdom of God is going to be a time when all will be enlightened on every subject. All shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. In the meantime, special light is for God's called-out people, those responsive to the love of Christ and who have been instructed in regard to the mysteries of the Kingdom. These are highly favoured now in their Christian life and development along the lines of the character and attributes of God. That is, to a great extent at least; we are still imperfect beings and cannot be like the perfect Master, but we can become copies of God's dear Son. That is just what we need to be to inherit the heavenly kingdom. God's spirit is the means of transforming human beings more and more into the likeness of His dear Son. As the Redeemer paid the price that all mankind may have life, so we now must also cherish human life, not in any way treat it cheaply. While there is no intention, possibly, with those who reject blood transfusions to treat human life cheaply, it may come to that when the conscience is not rightly regulated by the laws of God. The laws of the land might need to be changed so that parents or guardians would not have the only say in respect of infants particularly, to give them an opportunity of growing up, and ultimately living forever in the kingdom of God. Sometimes a combination of minds may arrive at a better conclusion than one individual.

So let us appreciate our privileges as children of the Lord. Let us appreciate the increase of knowledge in the world today. We should cherish our Bibles, knowing it was impossible to have them only a short while ago. All the additional, benefits of our age are to be used for the Lord. So in the matter of blood transfusions; they should be accepted as one of the blessings, the increase of knowledge that can be used gratefully and thankfully to God's praise. If we are healthy enough to give blood donations, it would be a good procedure. Otherwise we should not. We should not make ourselves ill about it, but if anyone is healthy enough, that surely is a contribution to help some who are otherwise unable to help themselves.

Christians are not to separate themselves from the world into better environments, but to be representatives of the Lord and to be seen of men, not to be hidden away like some mistakenly believe. The Lord's people must be representatives and ambassadors for Christ. Let their moderation be known to all men, their reasonableness, their appropriateness. Let their spirit of a sound mind be an evidence that they are upholding the Word of God, and are in hope of the heavenly kingdom, and helping others with whom they come in contact day by day. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." We see the individuality of the Christian call. We do not gain the heavenly kingdom by belonging to a church or earthly organisation. We grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as individual members. We are taught in the school of Christ that we might be able to appropriate the truths to ourselves, being guided by them more and more along our Christian pathway. May it be that we appreciate all our privileges as we walk along the way day by day faithfully, by the Lord's grace.

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Stephen's Dying Prayer.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God (R.V. "the Lord"), and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."—Acts 7:59,60.

AS usually understood, the "spirit" referred to by the persecuted saint, is an immortal part in man, which, in the case of the pious, is borne aloft to the nightless world at the final hour. About to die, it is assumed that the martyr committed himself, or his spirit, to the Saviour, in the hope of enduring happiness as soon as liberated from the tenement of clay. A pleasing representation, no doubt; but one encompassed with difficulties we dare not overlook.

This common view is diametrically opposed to our Lord's testimony in the hearing of His Apostles immediately before His crucifixion, — "I go to prepare a place for you." — John 14:2. At the conclusion of their toils and pains were they appointed to go thither—as orthodoxy assures its disciples now? It seems not (verse 3)—"And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also ;" words which may be regarded as explanatory of John 13:33-36. When He rose in sublime majesty from the mountain top, the attending angels said to those who were spectators of His removal — "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner"—that is, quietly and unknown to the world—"as ye have seen Him go into heaven."—Acts 1:11. The doctrine of Scripture then is, there is no such thing as going to Him at death; not one saint will be privileged to behold His face till He revisits this world, according to His promise.

The Apostle Paul understood the Divine plan and ordination perfectly, and therefore anticipated neither reward nor inheritance till the Lord should be manifested a second time without a sin-offering unto salvation. "I am now ready to be offered," he says, "and the time of my departure,"—that is, from life—"is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me"—at death? No—"At that day"—when He returns; "and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." — 2 Tim. 4:6-8. Was not Stephen educated in the same grand errorless spiritual school? Knew he not that the Deliverer in whom he trusted had spoken in this manner, "I will come again and receive you unto myself?"

Following His hours of agony on the hill of shame, and when the last moment had arrived, the Man of Sorrows, after crying with a loud voice, closed His utterances with these words—"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (literally out-breathed); that is — died — Luke 23:46. According to Matthew 27:50, He "yielded up the ghost" (literally, dismissed His spirit,); that is, drew His last breath, or ceased to live. Stephen, the earliest martyr among the disciples, appears to have imitated his Master in the closing scene. Jesus said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." When the stones were cruelly battering his quivering form, Stephen appealed thus — "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

The original word used by the dying Lord, and by His dying servant, is pneuma, translated "spirit," and both passages are given in Robinson's Greek Lexicon of the New Testament as illustrations of the term, when indicating "the principle of life residing in the breath ;" turning our thoughts back to the old record. — "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."—Gen. 2:7.

Taking this as undoubtedly correct, the right interpretation of this expiring witness' devout language is not hard to find. He called on his exalted Lord to receive back the life-giving breath, or to accept his life which he rendered up as a sacrifice on the altar of Christianity. Very different from the popular view, but quite in accord with the general teachings of Scripture, and the rest of the narrative itself. After exclaiming,—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"—did he pass upwards to the heavenly abode? As a spirit, winged he his flight to the Redeemer's presence? No, verily, "He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, — Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." He was stoned to death, he returned to the dust. For him there was no release till the "dead in Christ," during His presence and by His power, burst forth in the bloom and blessedness of immortality.—Selected.

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(From Bro. B. H. Barton's Note Book) .

THE PATIENT PERSEVERANCE which defeat cannot discourage nor discouragement defeat.

THE IMPARTIALITY which delights as much in a grand work another has done, as if you had done it yourself.

THE SPIRIT which finds a more ready excuse for your brother than for yourself.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS which would rather right a wrong than conceal your share in it.

THE CHASTITY which always looks for some good intention, even where a slight or injury are seemingly intended

THE CHRISTIANITY which is as careful how we live in our homes as how we act before the brethren.

THE LOYALTY which even your stumblings and failures cannot dishearten.

THE LOWLINESS which will sorrow when your enemy falls and rejoice when you are humbled.

THE WISDOM which knows when to speak and when to be silent.

THE ZEAL which can never do enough and yet asks no credit and encourages no compliments.

THE FORGIVENESS which not only pardons in words, but proves its reality by never referring to the matter again.

THE HUMILITY which would choose the meaner and more undesirable part of a service, to leave the nobler and more honourable part for another brother.

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p 4.45 p.m.