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Fred S. Richards

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sets at defiance our better judgment and the whole fabric
of the Christian Religion, we will endeavour to find some
consolation by taking a more harmonious view of the subject.
The words of Jesus to the penitent bespeak the highest and
holiest consolation, "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."
And "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." Such is
the language of hope and consolation left us by our
guide and refuge even Christ Jesus. Yes blessed
by God for the knowledge of that hope that when the
body is cold in death, the spirit still exists in more
than the fullness of earthly knowledge, and at the
Resurrection will gladly return to its former tenement
to endow it with immortality.

"But they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had
seen a spirit. And He (Jesus) said unto them, why are ye troubled,
and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that
it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones,
as ye see me have." Luke XXI. 37, 38, 39. That St. Stephen believed
in his having a spirit, is evident from his dying words. That the Apostles
believed in spirits of the dead is evident from the above quoted language.
That the Saviour believed in such a thing as a spirit is also evident from the
same quotation; also from his dying words, viz, Father, into thy hands I commend
my spirit. Now if the doctrine of spirits were false, would not Jesus
have been aware of that fact, and if so, would He have used that which was
superfluous, and would he not have taught His disciples their error?
That the Saviour and His Apostles believed in spirits of the dead,
spirits without flesh and bones, and having the semblance of the bodies
they once animated, is evident from the Scriptures quoted. And now
let me ask, is not such a spirit immortal? I answer, yes. But if you
deny the immortality of the spirit, be so kind as to inform me the precise
length of time that it exists as such, and what becomes of it when it ceases
to be such, and what the cause of its ceasing to be such, and what
becomes of it when it ceases to be such.

Sincerely Yours
A. Richards

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to us a useless phrase: then in very deed are we but ~~brutes~~
of a higher intellectual order; then indeed the last trump
may sound - but for what? not to raise mortals to im-
mortality, but to extinguish life eternally; then indeed the
last Trump may sound - but for what? that the grave and
death may be swallowed up in ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{Victory of the Lamb?} No. But that
death and the grave shall swallow up all in one eternal
sleep; then indeed the last Trump may sound, but it
will be the ~~eternal~~ death - well eternal to all then living or have
ever lived; then indeed may Jesus come with myriads of Angels
attending him, to establish his throne on earth and to build
for himself a Kingdom. But none that have ever lived
and sinners can form a part of that Kingdom. But by his
almighty ^{Power} he will call up countless millions from the
bosom of the earth, even as Adam at the first - countless
millions ~~unspotted~~ ^{unspotted} by sin; and they shall be his for an eternal
inheritance. Then will be the millennium of eternal Peace.

But my Friend methinks you smile, at what I ask? At
my Logic you reply. Stop my Brother you are wrong, such
is not my reasoning, but your own; and how do you like it?
Such is the only conclusion to which any sane person can
arrive, reasoning from your premises. Your argument
is, that the Spirit (mind and memory) ceases to exist as such,
with the death of the matter which it animated. ~~Such~~
be the fact, ^{the} birth cry, the death groan, the ~~death~~ ^{desert} of life
interspersed with an occasional oasis, constitutes the whole ~~sum~~
and substance, being, end and aim of the creature man,
and when the last Trump shall sound, then having ceased
eternally, ceased to exist, it matters not whether this dust
shall be created anew into a jocky or an angel.

Do you my Brother continue to preach such a soul-killing
and Spirit blighting doctrine? Do you yet seek to destroy
man's only hope? Will you under the name of Religion lead
your fellow men to the brink of the grave seeking to divert
them of the ~~highest~~ ^{highest} hope that true Religion affords? - the
hope of a higher and holier state of being beyond the grave?
Beware my Brother beware that you fall not into that
pit which you have dug deep for the unwary of your
fellow men. Beware, lest the blind leading the blind
all fall into the pit of unbelief together.

We will now return to the words of the Saviour, and consider
them, Thirdly! Having seen that the view taken of the words
of the words of the Saviour, as considered First, and secondly

Fort Fairfield
Letter D, October 22nd 1848

My Dear Brother;

Your kind favour of the
24th ult. was duly received. I am glad to learn
that you and my Sister are enjoying good Health;
That of myself and family is good.

You speak of the change that a few years bring.
It is too true. Experience, sad experience has taught
me the uncertainty of earthly hopes. With a few
brief years have fled the most of my earlier cher-
ished hopes. But it is well, or at least I hope
so. I have but little to reproach the world with; with
myself, less. Though many of my most cherished hopes
have fled; though I have seen much of adversity;
though I am as it were surrounded with a wall
of poverty, yet I have hopes. Truly, "hope is the
balm of life that soothes us under every disappointment."
But what my present hopes are I will ~~not~~ attempt to
describe, they are so many and various. Do no more
of "hope" at present. - - -

My Dear Brother, I perceive you challenge me
to a written discussion of - of - of what? ^{say}, that
is the sub. But as near as I can infer you wish us
to consider some points of your theological opinions,
Well, before I proceed further I will say, that I am
no theologian. Had you challenged me to a po-
litical discussion, I would gladly have taken
up the glove; as I am a whig and nothing but a whig

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But notwithstanding my ignorance of theology, and want of time, I gladly accept of the privilege of aiding you to stand fast where you are right, and to aid you to escape that which is wrong.

Now First. you appear to believe in the second coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. So do I.

That rock is firm, so stand fast upon it. —

Second: When He comes there will be a restitution of all things, you say. So say I. Thud it seems you ~~are~~ are a believer in that most beautiful doctrine, the salvation of the whole human family! How bright, how glorious, how cheering that hope, — the restitution of all things! My Dear Brother does not such a glorious faith make your heart warm towards all of Adam's fallen race?

Third: You believe that after the Resurrection, the Righteous will again inhabit this same earth or in other words, that our Lord and Saviour will establish His Kingdom on this earth at the time of His second coming. Well, I believe so too. But I do not believe that a part of the dead, and a part of the living are to be caught up into the Heavens, as it were, there to be for a thousand years; ~~and~~ while the rest of the living are to remain on earth, subject to war, pestilence, famine, and all the miseries that human flesh is heir to. No, I do not believe in any such semi-barbarian mythology. Do you?

can be produced between the lids of the Bible; and as you are pre-pledged to believe so far, if even one Scripture can be produced to establish it, I shall expect to receive in your netts, a complete and full renunciation of your present ~~infidel~~ notions. How you could persist in such a creature of ~~an~~ an imaginary fancy, when you could so readily anticipate that portion of the Scriptures which will overthrow your vainly built fabric, is to me one of the incomprehensibles. — And Jesus said unto him,

Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. St. Luke, XXIII. 43. — "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the Ghost." St. Luke, XXIII. 46. — "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a Spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." St. Luke, XXIV. 37, 38, 39. — "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit." Acts, VII. 59. — Now my Dear Brother, I propose to offer a few words by way of comment, upon a portion of the passages of Holy writ.

And First, what is meant by the word Paradise? Did the Savior mean to say, "this day shalt thou be with me in the grave"? Such a conclusion sets common sense at defiance. For what consolation could have been imparted to the penitent culprit by informing him, at the hour of death, what he well knew, i. e. that his body must go into the grave. That would be consolation with a vengeance! And secondly; did the Savior intend to convey to the penitent thief the idea that the grave was Paradise? That every principle that had animated the body was to become as oblivious of the past, present and future, as the inanimate clod, that was so soon to be returned to its mother dust? "For dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return." Could such knowledge impart consolation to the dying man? Were you my Brother on your dying bed, and one whose you could not doubt, should tell you that your Spirit would become as oblivious as the body that was soon to be consigned to the silent grave ~~that~~ — i. e. body and Spirit would soon be alike forgetful of all things, past, present and future? Would such be the language of consolation and hope? Is such the hope and consolation of your Religion? Oh so, alas! I pity your case. To one of such a belief, how dark, how gloomy, how cheerless the prospect of death. And such, I can only infer from the whole tenor of your communication, is your belief. But, say you, I believe in a Resurrection of the body, and that to be again endowed with a Spirit. Well what will that be to you, one of any of Adam's race. If, during the sleep of death of the body, there be no part of us that retains knowledge or memory — retains the knowledge that it once had a body — a mortal body — that that body suffered pain, sickness, death — that that same knowledge sorrowed and joyed — that it loved and was beloved — that will remember and know that body when it is risen from the grave — that will remember and know all those whom in life we loved and by whom we were beloved — if such be the fact, then in truth man is not an immortal being; then indeed is "the Resurrection"

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Fifth; I draw the inference from your reasoning that you do not believe in an immortal, soul, mind, memory or Spirit. Well, that is what I call infidelity. True, I cannot charge you of Atheism, as I infer you believe in a God; neither a Deist, as you believe in a risen Saviour. But you are, nevertheless, an Infidel, in as much as you deny the existence of an immortal principle in man. In support of this Semi-Deism theory, you say in effect, if the Spirit of man is immortal, so must be that of a beast. Well, I would ask, by what authority do you infer that a beast has not an immortal Spirit? You admit, nay more, you assert, that you believe in the Restoration of all things. (Not a part.) Surely, if ^{you} believe in the reward of merit, you must believe that the brute creation will enjoy a much higher state of perfection in the future state of existence, than man; inasmuch as the brute has ~~answered~~ ^{fulfilled} the purpose for which it was created, whereas man has come immeasurably short of it.

Throwing aside the subject of beasts, I will come more directly to the consideration of the subject of an immortal Spirit in man.

I assume, and believe, that there exists an immortal Spirit, mind, or memory in man; and that it will exist in the same fullness, at least, after the death of our bodies, as before. In support of this position I intend to offer the highest and most absolute authority that

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Fourth, you say that I am aware that the soul of man is said to be immortal? "That Catholic & Protestant Priests & Ministers all preach it".

In reply to the first clause, I say, I am aware of no such thing: In reply to the last, I must answer, that, (although I have had nearly thirty one years intercourse with mankind) it is new to me. You go on to say in effect, that you do not believe in the immortality of the soul. Neither do I.

— — — — — "And man became a living soul." Here it is evident that ^{the} idea conveyed is, that man became a living body. When man was made of the dust of the earth, he ^{or it} was a body inanimate, till the breath of life was breathed into his nostrils; then he became a living body, or soul.

Again, the Psalmist says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;" which properly rendered would read, Thou wilt not leave my body in the grave. From which it is evident, that David believed in a Resurrection of the body.

I shall not, however, contend that the word soul, as found in the Bible, invariably means body.

It is not to be supposed that the ancient Greeks and Hebrews used ~~the~~ words of their language with any more propriety, than we, ours. Thus, for instance, in speaking of the immortal principle that exists in man, one person will designate it soul; another, mind; another, spirit; another, memory.