

# NOT IN HADES, BUT WITH CHRIST.

THEY say that after death man goes into *hades* (good or bad), or (as in the Old Testament), into *sheol*. Dictionaries call it "the Place of departed spirits," or "the unseen World." Sentimentalists talk of it as "Over the river," and speak of the "Great Beyond," &c. It does not appear to me that any of these expressions convey what is very definite or comforting to the soul (albeit, that only those who accept them are said to be *orthodox*). Suppose we turn to scripture.

I cannot find that the dying believer goes to *hades*, whatever that may mean to the learned. He goes to Christ. This is what I find. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." "To depart, and to be with Christ," the apostle says, "is far better." And we must surely distinguish between Christ and

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hades. If one departs to be with Christ, Christ is not hades, nor is He *in* hades. As to hades, scripture says (with regard to Christ), "Thou wilt not leave my soul in [or *to*] hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Hence Christ is not in hades, and therefore "to depart and to be with Christ" cannot mean to go into hades. His holy body went into the grave, His holy spirit He commended to His Father, but His holy soul He says here was *not* left in hades, and could not be. Though He stooped to all that death and judgment meant for man, yet "it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts ii. 24.)

J. N. D. says, in the French Bible, in Psalm xvi., "Tu n'abandonneras mon ame au sheol." And in German he also says, "Meine seele wirst du dem sheol nicht lassen." Notice here we have "*to* hades," in both places. I gather from the Lord's words that hades was no more a desirable place for the *soul* than the grave was for

the *body* ! Sin introduced both. I do not know any saints in *Hades*, I know many who are *with Christ*.

Yes ! Christ, the only one unique and perfect MAN—Christ, neither holden of the grave, nor detained by hades—Christ, “body, soul and spirit,” rose triumphant over every adverse power (and they were all there) spoiling these principalities and powers “in Himself,” or “in it.” And He ascended, “leading captivity captive,” and there He is now in heaven, and we believers are either going to Him there, or we are waiting for Him to come from heaven to take us there ! “From whence [heaven] we look for him as Saviour.” (Phil. iii.)

So far as my reading goes, I find *there is no hades for the believer*. He goes to Christ, and, as I have said, Christ is not hades, nor is He in hades. The dying believer’s body (by means of which he has been known as a man on the earth) will probably go into the grave, if he dies, but not the man himself. The body is only the shell,

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not the inhabitant, though even the shell is dear to the Lord, and will come up "a spiritual body." So we read that Stephen was *buried*, that is, the body was put into the grave by "devout men." But without doubt Stephen went to Christ! He went to Him, whom, with his dying breath, he addressed in those memorable words, analogous to those of Christ Himself, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Yet Stephen left at that moment the poor, stone-battered "earthly tabernacle house" (this is what the apostle calls the body in 2 Cor. v. 1). That body they laid in the grave, but what of Stephen? The Lord Jesus received him at the same moment. Who can doubt it?

If saints who die now go to be with Christ, where did believers go before Christ? They went to "*Abraham's bosom*," whatever that may mean. A better place than hades!

The fact (it appears to me) is, that "death" and "hades" *stand or fall together*. They have FALLEN, and

Christ "holds the keys of hades and of death." When they have triumphed they have triumphed together. I read, "His name that sat on him is called Death, and Hades followed with him." It seems to me that the break-up of the man (the body going to the grave and the soul to hades), *came in through sin*. But if you cannot connect Christ now any more with sin, if you cannot connect Christ any more with death, if you cannot connect Christ now with hades, neither can you connect either of them in the thought of God with the believer! I know, of course, that a believer *may* have to die. But even then I say that the *house* is not the *tenant*. The believer is connected not with death, but with life. He is connected for time and eternity with the Lord. *This* is his association now. IN VICTORY. (1 Cor. xv. 57.)

We are so completely in association with Christ and life now, as believers, that the very word *death* is everywhere changed for the believer into

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*sleep.* (John xi. 11, 1 Thess. iv. 14, v. 10, 1 Cor. xv. 51, &c.)

Death and hades are found linked together in 1 Corinthians xv. 55, where the Christian is seen to be delivered from both. “O death, where is thy sting? O ~~hades~~<sup>death</sup>, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth *us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here we see that the believer is not waiting till the resurrection of the body to be assured of victory over death and hades. He is in the good of it now, and *may not have to die at all!* I have already referred to Revelation vi., where death and hades are seen together. But there is a further and most important passage shewing their intimate connection in Revelation xx. There, where we have the subject of the great white throne, and the dead before it after the millennium, and where neither *death* nor *hades* can deliver up a single believer, we read: “And death and hades delivered up the dead which

were in them : and they were judged every one according to his works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire." Death and hades here deliver up their occupants, they, in this act, go together, and here, at their final dissolution, it is seen that *they each contain that class only called the unbelieving*. It is, moreover, without question that the unbeliever at death goes both into hades and into torment. The Lord lifts that awful veil which hides the unbeliever's future, and shews us this in Luke xvi. : " In hades he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

I am reminded to say one word more. All this present blessedness of the believer as to his body, his soul, and his spirit springs from his association with Christ, the *second* man ; just as the break-up of the man (as God created him) comes upon him through sin, and his association with Adam, the *first* man. It is the resurrection of Christ which leaves death and all involved in it not only for

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Himself, but also for us, behind. He who could say "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" has enabled the believer also to say "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." *He* said it in all the calm, full joy of His triumph, and a dying believer knows something of *that victory*. Nothing can separate those who are Christ's from Him.

Believer! You are not going into the grave, nor into hades, if you should have to die. I cannot find any *good* hades. Do not forget that the Lord's coming (1 Cor. xv. 23) is your hope. But *if you should have to die*, you are going straight away TO BE WITH CHRIST! Let no one rob you of this fact.

"Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.)

H. C. A.

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