



The text reads: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Some believe that when a person dies there is a material part, capable of thinking, seeing, feeling and talking that leaves the body and goes up to God, if the person is righteous, and to hell if he is wicked. But notice, this text does not say anything about the condition of the person. It says when man dies the dust returns to earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God Who gave it. If this text teaches what some try to make it, then it also teaches universal salvation, for just as universal as the dust returns to the earth just that sure does the spirit return to God. Then the spirits of the good and bad return to God who gave them.

Again, you could not return anywhere unless you had been there before. Then if these spirits, both good and bad, return to God, they were with God before. This would teach that wicked spirits were in heaven, and make God responsible for sending them to possess the infants at their birth, both wicked and good, and would make Him a partner in and responsible for the wicked spirits entering and possessing the wicked.

The facts are that there is no in-

tellectual part of the body that leaves it and enters into reward at death. The word here translated "spirit" is taken from the Hebrew word "Ruich" which means breath. The same word is translated breath twenty-five times in the Old Testament and refers to the breath of life.

In Genesis 2:7, the Lord says He breathed into the nostrils of man the breath of life and man became a living soul. When man dies, just as sure as the dust returns to the earth as it was, the "ruich," or breath of life returns to God who gave it. This refers to all men. It does not, however, teach that the actual breath goes to heaven where God is, but simply to His care and keeping. Suppose a man owns a farm in Missouri which he sells on certain conditions on time payments and goes to California. In a course of time, the man to whom he sells the farm fails or refuses to meet the financial obligation, the farm then returns to the man who sold it. The farm would not go from Missouri to California, but only to the care and keeping of the former owner, and so it is in this case, the breath returns to God's keeping who gave it to us in the first place.

If the reader will kindly note James 2:26, where it reads, "For the body without the spirit is dead, so faith

without works is dead also." Notice by the word "spirit" there is a small letter or figure, and follow this to the margin of your Bible, and you will find the same letter or figure. There it will say, "Or breath." You will find this in all Bibles that have references.

The word "spirit" when having reference to any part of man that leaves him at death always means the breath and nothing more or nothing less. But there is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit that dwells within His people. This is altogether different, and has no connection with the phase of the question above considered. The word "spirit" sometimes refers to our life also, the essentials of life, the thinking powers, etc., while it refers sometimes to our nature, as a bad spirit, or a lovely spirit was manifest, he was in good spirits today, etc.

As the Lord judges people at the general judgment and rewards them then at the resurrection, they are not judged or rewarded at death. See Luke 14:14; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; also Rev. 22:12.

*The Church of God Publishing
House
PO Box 328
Salem, West Virginia 26426-0328*

*Phone: 304-782-1411
Fax: 304-782-2248*