

"The witness-box is an odd sort of place.
Sometimes people feel unable to lie in it.
Francesca said, 'Yes.'"

-THE TRIALS OF RUMPOLE
(Mortimer 1979:166)

"He did not know that the new life would not
be given him for nothing, that he would have
to pay dearly for it, that it would cost him
great striving, great suffering.

But that is the beginning of a new story
--the story of the gradual renewal of a man,
the story of his gradual regeneration, of his
passing from one world into another, of his
initiation into a new unknown life.

-CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
(Dostoyevsky 1950:532)

40. TESTING CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION:

As noted above, there is less information about the nature of the post-mortal, pre-resurrection phase than about the pre-existence. Such a difference naturally leads one to ask "Why?" And such a question is impossible to answer with any degree of confidence. The only idea I raise as a possibility is really a question, rather than an answer:

Is it possible that the dearth of information is (a) intentional because (b) the Lord did not wish to distract us from our present task by providing too much detail about the next phase we will find ourselves in after we die?

Note in regards to this question that we do in fact have a great deal of information about the resurrection state, about degrees of glory, the nature of the earth, etc.

One might compare the amount of detail about the final state with the amount of information about the post-mortal phase and conclude that the difference is based on several factors. First, since we are told that there is an intervening phase that we must traverse to get to resurrection, we are not likely to somehow try to terminate our present experiment prematurely, not to dwell unnecessarily on it. Second, since that state is the final state, really the target of the entire process, perhaps that much detail is given to us as encouragement to inspire us to try to perform well.

And remember that there is more information about the pre-existence than about the post-mortal phase. The explanation for this would be that since that phase is passed for us, we will not be needlessly distracted from our present phase by knowledge about it. In any event, there is a great deal of information about the resurrected state and the pre-existence, but little about the next phase, so it does appear to be an intentional omission by the Lord.

Perhaps the Lord did in fact skimp on those details in order to not distract us.^{1} If this is the case, one then asks what

¹ That testing requires ignorance of some 'truths' sets us up for some peculiar behaviors that are probably manifested or experienced in all three phases of our metamorphosis. One of them is described by Clancy in WITHOUT REMORSE thusly:

"He was afraid to pray for deliverance - a thought he was unable even to admit, for it would be an internal admission that his faith had somehow been shaken, and that was something he could not allow, but part of him knew that in not praying for deliverance, he was admitting something by omission; that if he prayed, and after a time deliverance didn't come, then his faith might start to die, and with that his soul. For Robin Zacharias, that was how despair began, not with a thought, but with the unwillingness to entreat his God for something that might not come." (1993:274)

In this novel, Robin is a Mormon, from Utah, who is a tithing-paying elder who has never tasted alcohol. His surname Zacharias is probably symbolic. Zacharias of the NT was told about rebirth through baptism, but Robin experiences a symbolic introduction into the world, rather than the converse, by being 'baptized' by drinking vodka. Clancy obviously knows something about Mormonism, but we collected this quote for the painfully true comment about being on the horns of a dilemma. Robin can lose his faith either by NOT praying as well as by praying. So true, we fear.

So much better to just acknowledge that one has no knowledge of anything, that s/he takes everything on faith alone. That way there is no need to justify or explain or rationalize anything. The failure of God to respond means nothing. Nor does an apparent 'answer' really mean anything profound. The latter is merely a possibility, for which one is grateful, but which doesn't need to become a foundation that can later be eroded by something tragic.

These comments probably strike the reader as a contradiction to the essence of this work. If I live by pure faith, then why do I engage in such endless nit-picking examinations of everything about my religion? I can see this contradiction, I admit it. And I like it. That's a zen-like aspect of this millstone, that doesn't bear examination, or at least doesn't produce anything logical on examination.

the consequences of such "distraction" might be, and could come up with various possibilities. First, there is the remote possibility that if the next phase sounded particularly enticing, which it does not sound like with the present amount of information, individuals who were experiencing significant depression or who were behaving particularly recklessly, might intentionally take their lives in order to reach that phase. Unless you have personally experienced such severe depression, this may sound like a far-fetched suggestion, in which case, be assured that it is not.

A second possible reason for the information lack is this: if too much were known about the proximate phase perhaps excess time would be spent in speculation about that phase. This would only be a problem is it caused us to slack off from doing our duties down here.

The next notion to bring out here about the post-mortal phase Trelates to the conditions we will find ourselves in. By this, I refer to the type of social relations we will experience, rather than the "physical" location which was already mentioned above. The data to consider regarding social relations is simply the fact that we will be sent to one of two places. If we just divide our total numbers of 15 billion into halves, probably an optimistic division, we would have 7.5 billions in each location. While we are there, we will probably be in proximity to each other, rather than being assigned to some sort of galactic pigeon-hole. And if we are near each other, and if we are still alive, then we are likely to talk to each other. And we are likely to have differences of opinions.

Now, throw in the fact that Satan, Inc. will still be shooting at us. Then we have essentially the same mixture of forces we have here on earth. And predictably, we will have similar positive and negative experiences and will live out a wide range of activities. We will find ourselves bonding and grouping in particular ways. There will be in-groups and outsiders. And there will be prejudice and various other sinful things.

And that is the way it must be for us because, in spite of the fact that SMD doesn't tell us this, postmortality is as important a testing phase for us as mortality is. I make this claim based simply of the fact that Satan will have access to us. Perhaps I am incorrect in this interpretation, but I see no other. Either he has a shot at us or he doesn't. And if he does, I imagine that with his malignant influences being spread around 5 billion or so imperfect free-agents, there will be the same sort of unrest and dissatisfaction there that we have down here now.

Obviously, the major difference between the tests of mortality and the tests of postmortality is the fact that here we have a physical body and there we apparently will not. We will simply be our spirit self. So we will not be able to indulge in activities that required a physical body and a physical environment, e.g. alcoholism. However, we will remain who we are, so the predilections we have here will go with us, and if we are alcoholic, we will "mentally" relive our addictions and replay pertinent memories. So will still be able to be adapting our spirit matter in different ways, either positive or negative.

We will live in some sort of society and civilization there and will experience Satan's influences. We will have our free

agency and will be making bushels of choices. And the priesthood will be operative there, and males will hold it in paradise and will be able to exercise it on behalf of each other, just as we do down here. In essence, post-mortality will be another mortality, minus the **MORTAL** bodies.