

For what is your life? It is a vapor that passes away -
James. 1:26 - I remember that my life is wind - mine
eye shall no more see good Job 7:7

These passages of scripture undoubtedly refer to the life of
the body. Certainly James must have so thought as he wrote. Job
may have been in his pessimistic mood referring to the totality
of life but if he was so thinking at the time he would seem to be in
with himself in other moods. For Job was a very devout believer in
he never questioned his existence or reality. There were times when
he was bitter against him, when he thought he was not fair or just
but that God is and operates this scheme of things was never questioned
in his mind. If one believes that God is - I claim he is inconsistent
to doubt or question the reality of spiritual things. One must be an atheist
to reject belief in spiritual reality. If one spiritual being exists
there is every reason to believe that others do too.

The answer one gives to the question "What is your life?"
makes a mighty difference with one's outlook, one's aims and
purposes and objectives - one's sense or idea of "Values in Life".
It will determine one's philosophy - and certainly greatly modify
one's manner of living. Not everybody will have a conscious
philosophy - not everyone strange as it may seem, will even
ask or try to answer or find an answer to the question "What
is your life? my life. ~~Not~~ ^{Not} everyone will at least have one life
value that it may have some permanent values, that it may
outlast death. But many live until they think death approaches
with very little or no thought about it. Having eased the people
from fear of torment and hell - the people are content to live
this respect like Henry Thoreau did. As he was dying a clergyman
visited him to help him make his peace with God as he called
it. Thoreau remonstrated with "One world at a time my goodness
one world at a time" In like Thoreau's answer it was manly
courageous and in the light of his life commendable; yet
it is a barren and poor philosophy for the hoi polloi.
The masses do not live so well under its philosophy.

I am not undertaking to present an elaborated answer to this question, to day nor to present the evidence in the case as to whether this system of which we are a part is merely physical or fundamentally spiritual. I assume that all of you ministers and church people believe in God, the soul, in immortality and the reality of spirit. If there are not a amission with you I wonder why you identify yourself with a Christian Church - Or what service one renders that could not as well or even better rendered in some other organization. If spiritual ministrations be not the office, the peculiar office of the church it has to my mind no excuse for existence. It costs too much for one thing. It cannot be justified on the ground of its material achievement and other agencies are better qualified for such work. But what is your life? What are you - strangely animated bodies or living and everlasting souls? The theory, conviction of faith and hope of immortality makes everything different to people who believe it. It makes the more important transactions of life tremendously ^{significant} ~~important~~ - raises some of them to the level of a sacrament; if we use the word in its accepted sense, an outward & visible sign of an inward & spiritual grace, or a means by which we receive such grace. Those activities which color or tone or train the soul that enlarge consciousness, that endow the heart ^{with} wisdom, fire and courage. That create spiritual enlargement - well there is nothing so important. so necessary - of which we all stand so much in need.

As immortal souls - the greater values in life are spiritual but as material bodies - the greater values are those things that give us ease, security, plenty, as money, houses, food clothing and after that Automobiles, yachts, & all luxuries - For these things men sacrifice every graceful and valuable faculty of the soul. They grow hard - selfish - cruel - indifferent. nor think they are anything but good citizens & valuable members of society. If in this life only we have hope - we are of all men most miserable -

If we be immortal souls, and not ^{merely} physical automata
it is obvious that our soul interest is paramount to every
other interest we may have. If the law of cause and effect
is operative and obtains always and we reap what we sow
even our selfish ^{interest} would counsel us to look to the welfare of the soul.

But if we be not living souls - well our preaching is vain
so is our faith + our hope and so is at least as far as I can see
the whole scheme of things. It leaves the very universe without plan
purpose or objective.

But as I said at first I'm not interested to day to examine
the evidence in case as to our mortality or immortality. Let me
observe however right here that many people who have engaged more
than superficially, have been convinced upon the evidence and do
not hold the doctrine on faith alone but have sure knowledge that
there is objective + purpose to life - that we are immortal souls and
that consciousness is ~~above~~ ^{above} and ~~more~~ ^{more} independent of physical organism.

I only wish to observe that people who have what we call
spiritual interests - who take thought for the soul - who live not for
this life only; live better, more usefully + more beautifully than those
who have no such thought.

Men like Jesus, Socrates, Paul, Kaganer, Gandhi, Tolstoy.
and women like Clara Barton - Jane Adams, Evangeline Booth
are outstanding examples of what I mean. The women that
make up the majority of most every congregation in America. The women
on whom we depend for our charities and our missions - who self
sacrificingly give our earthly interests for others - who have thought of and
at least live for spiritual ends - Such souls are the salt of the
earth + give life flavor. They are the light that diffuses the murky and
+ the gloom of the world. It is always to such people that we
look and have to rely for nearly all of our philanthropies and social
organizations that minister to human needs. Such people furnish
the leadership for great social ideals - as world peace; world brotherhood
and the things that pertain to the Kingdom of God. It would be
most interesting to enquire of the founders of most every thing
good. What is your idea of a man - what is he? A lump
of clay? or an immortal soul?

Having spiritual interests and ambitions and hopes - people
live naturally for different ends + purposes than do those who have
them not. A life like Jesus is sensible as even an ignorant
can perceive only if we live eternally. Only if to live it is to gain
it. If there be compensations for self sacrifice. Then many who
for conscience's sake, to maintain their integrity and honor and
kept their souls unsullied from the world, and have spent lives
in prisons, or perhaps in poverty, many who have been stoned or
crucified or shot or ostracised socially have not lived foolishly nor
in vain but have really done life's greater successes + heroes.
Some of these have occupied very humble positions and we
have never heard of them but in every parish we find these heroes
souls without whom anything of value in the church and even in
the community would stop. Without such people, whom I for
one cannot think misguided - schools would sag - morals sink
crime would flourish even more than it does. ~~Without~~ I would be
even more without restraint. For as the old prophet said where
there is no vision the people perish. Without God they cast off restraint
Looking here they are lost, without pole star, rudder, compass, or pilot
our lives rather + stormy seas -

There can be no doubt however but that our present era is
for great numbers of people a practical materialism. It isn't that
the masses have thought things thru to a materialistic philosophy of life
they are really incapable of the mental effort. But the pressure of necessities
of life - our selfish business principles, our whole economic, and political
organization has tended to blind and confuse man. He has had little
time or even opportunity to consider or try to answer the question "What
is man?" He has been propagandized to thinking that he is just a
hand - life in the interests of business, of pleasures, + our states have been held
+ made cheap. A man to day - just a hand. in the field of labor is not
really as significant nor as thoughtfully cared for as a mule or a
car or any valuable machine. I cannot enumerate all the
factors that have diverted the attention of people from this thought of what
life really is - But it evidently has been so diverted with what
we all must think are most unfortunate and
disastrous results.