

# The Doctrine of Immortality

by

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## **THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY**

### **Itching Ears**

The New Testament reveals that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears” (2 Tim. 4:3).

“The time” here referred to has come, for this is the day “when they will not endure sound doctrine”. People today want teachers who will not offend them with the rugged truth, but who will ply them rather with foibles, and who will provide them with a veneer of respectability, while they seek to fulfil their own purposes and desires, whatever these may be. The fashion of the times calls for the pleasurable tingling of the ears while charity is extended towards all the ideas and concerns and aspirations of the hearers.

“Sound doctrine” is not now considered to be so very important, and ideals of kindness and unity are thought to outweigh the value of Scriptural precepts. Teachers who meet this mood of the age, are those referred to by Paul in the passage quoted. Such teachers have been multiplying and are found “heaped together” in their various denominations, gatherings and seminaries. They are teachers “having itching ears”, who are always seeking new ideas and methods wherewith to stimulate, please and placate their hearers.

This heaping together of teachers with itching ears is to be found today in many centres of learning and in particular in the seminaries of the great Protestant religions. It is an extraordinary thing that many of the Church groups which fall from orthodoxy into error, do so first through the schools and institutions set up by godly men with the very intention of preventing and guarding against such declension. God intended the local churches to be themselves the custodians of Church and Gospel truth — not central schools. Wherever the schools become powerful and independent, they generally will not “endure sound doctrine”, and as Paul says to Timothy, such teachers “will turn away ears from the truth” (v. 4 R.V.).

In such an environment, teachers fall easily to pride of intellectual attainment, and they forsake the “sound doctrine” of the pure truth of God as it is set forth in the Scriptures in all its simplicity, and “through philosophy and vain deceit” (Col. 2:8) they cast about for startling new thoughts, wherewith to “spoil” (v. 8) the minds of their hearers “after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (v.8).

### **Modern Worldly Rudiments**

This process may be observed world wide today, and it brings two major consequences. First, God is not feared, and secondly, the Scriptures are not acknowledged, believed and acted upon, as the inerrant Word of God.

A modern instance of this has come to notice recently in the writer’s

country of New Zealand, in which the immortality of the soul has been questioned.

There are, however, still many God-fearing followers of the Lord throughout the present day Church of God, and it is with a desire to serve and help such that these pages have been prepared. If the production of this booklet could help towards the restoration of faith to others who have been diverted by the current “rudiments of the world”, then the effort involved will have been fully worth while.

The Professor of Old Testament studies at the New Zealand Presbyterian Theological College has recently tickled his own ears, and startled the ears of many others, with the pronouncements that he discerns, *inter alia*:—

- (a) That Christ’s physical body did not rise from the dead on the third day, and that “the bones of Jesus in all probability lie somewhere in Palestine”.
- (b) That “man has no immortal soul” and that “no part of man is immortal”.

Then the Professor of New Testament studies at the same College has confused the issues, and independently of his colleague, has announced as follows:—

- (a) “Immortality of the soul in the popularly understood sense as the eternal survival of one part of man is incompatible with the Biblical doctrine of resurrection”.
- (b) “Our hope is not in ourselves, not in the immortality of our souls, but in God who raised Jesus and will raise us”.
- (c) “It was *Jesus Christ* whom God raised from the dead, not simply the ‘soul’ of Jesus”. The Professor explains that in his view the man cannot exist apart from his body.

The Old Testament Professor says Christ’s body did not rise from the dead, and the New Testament Professor says that man cannot exist without the body, and that Christ rose from the dead, so that he must mean that Christ’s *body* rose from the dead. What a difference between the two Professors!

Both believe in no separate existence of the soul after death. Both intend it to be understood that they believe that there is no continuity of existence after death.

### **The Importance of These Issues**

These are matters of vital importance to the Christian Faith, and it is surely right that those who hold the Christian Faith should be ready with a full and Scriptural answer to all this groping and blindness. Many people today need the assistance of a simple but clear statement of the Truth of God as it is found in the Scriptures. Let us review the teaching and declarations of the Word of God, and set in order the vital grounds of the Faith “once delivered unto the saints”,

which as Jude tells us, we “should earnestly contend for” (Jude 3). We shall see as we proceed that the questions involved in this study go to the very foundation of the Faith, and we may be assured at the commencement of such a study, that what was “once delivered unto the saints” cannot be taken away or varied or modified in any degree by anyone at all.

It is proposed to illustrate and review the issues involved in the present New Zealand Presbyterian controversy, not to take a direct part in that controversy but because the issues are vital to the faith of all Christians and because the same challenge is being given today in every denomination and throughout the world. Readers overseas will immediately recognise that the two New Zealand Professors are only saying in their own way what great figures in the Church Councils of the World have said and are saying today.

### **Straws in the Wind**

The error with both Professors stems from the basic error that they both set their own philosophies above the Scriptures of Truth, and that they will not accept the Bible as the inerrant rule for life and doctrine. For instance, both Professors say that the Church got its idea of the immortality of the soul from the Greeks, and that the book of Ecclesiastes was written in the third century B.C.

### **Ecclesiastes**

If this book was written by Solomon in about B.C. 977, the date ascribed to it in many versions of the Bible, then of course it was written before the rise of the Greek philosophers who taught the immortality of the soul.

Now in this book there is a clear statement, in which the continuity of existence after death is in view. The writer says, speaking of death, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ch. 12:7). And at the end of the book he says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ch. 12:13 - 14).

That is, the writer taught both the continued existence of the *spirit* after death, and the accountability of the *man* to God thereafter. The Professors seek to discredit this, by inferring that the book was written only in the third century B.C. by someone who had in contemplation the then current Greek philosophy, rather than under inspiration of the Holy Spirit of Truth !

### **When was Ecclesiastes Written ?**

The writer declares that he was King over Israel in Jerusalem.

In Chapter 1, verse 12 he says "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem". Now in the third century there was no king at Jerusalem. Further, the last King at Jerusalem was taken into captivity in B.C. 610, so that the book must have been written by the Preacher prior to that date. But note further that the writer says he was King "of Israel" at Jerusalem. Now the last king of *Israel* at *Jerusalem* was Solomon, for after his reign the kingdom was divided, and the Kings of Israel reigned at Samaria or elsewhere, while the Kings of Judah reigned thereafter at Jerusalem.

Then the first verse of the first Chapter reads "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem". Solomon is the only possible person to fit the description of the two verses, 1 and 12 of Chapter 1.

If the book was in fact written by some Jew in Alexandria in Egypt, in the third century, as the two Professors say, then what a liar that writer was !

Rather are the Professors in error, and every Word of God is true.

## The Progression of Truth

It is to be remembered that most of the great truths of the Bible are not revealed in their fulness in the Old Testament, but they are generally introduced and developed in the Old Testament, and then fully revealed and expounded in the New Testament. Nevertheless the Old Testament statements are always consonant with the fulness of the truth as later revealed. So it is with many statements of the Old Testament about the life after death. Abraham, Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah and others spoke in a way that revealed a hope which is fully in agreement with teaching given in greater detail later by Christ and the apostles.

ABRAHAM "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

MOSES (well before the Greeks) said of life, "Yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and *we fly away*" (01:06 'sɔ)

JOB said "man giveth up the ghost *and where is he?*" (Job 14:10). Then later he said also "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

DAVID. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy form" (Ps 17:15).

SOLOMON. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7).

ISAIAH. "And they" (the high ones and the kings of the earth), "shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall

be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be punished” (Isa. 24:22).

THE LORD HIMSELF at the Burning Bush said to Moses “I AM . . . The Lord God of your Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exod. 3:14-15). This is stated early in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament Christ quotes from this Old Testament passage and says “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:32), meaning that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob whose bodies were then in the grave, were themselves alive. Christ also said at the same time to the Doctors of Divinity of His day, who questioned such matters, “ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matt. 22:29).

### **The Greek Philosophers**

It should not be thought surprising that in civilisations other than Judaism thinking men proposed and considered the possibility of an immortal soul which lives on after the death of the body. Now no groups of animals have yet been found who think and reason like this, because of course, they belong to a different order of creation. Man however is spirit and soul and body, and in his spirit he answers intuitively to God who is spirit, and he has an innate awareness of the spiritual, because he was created a living soul in the image of God who is spirit. That is, he is like God in spirit personality.

Most human civilizations have honoured God in some way, and most have shown an awareness of their place in the spirit creations of the universe, even though it may have involved forms of communication with evil spirits, in necromancy, in astrology, and mysticism as in ancient Babylon and in most heathen countries today. Some have developed the idea of the transmigration of souls, which is error. The point is, however, that it is part of the nature of man to have an awareness of the spirit world of which he is part, under the Father of Spirits (Heb. 12:9) who is his creator.

The Jews of Moses’ day were taught that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob though dead and buried, were still alive. Now later, the Greeks learned to believe that man had an immortal soul. It would only be conjecture to suggest “how” they came to have this belief, but it is consistent with all we know about man that the Greeks as others, should be occupied with such thoughts. The Ancient Egyptians and the Chinese of old, also taught, that the spirit lives on after the death of the body.

At the time of Christ there was declension and apostasy, and these things were argued among the learned Jews, who were divided into two schools of religious philosophical thought. One school was like the Presbyterian school at Dunedin, and denied that man had an immortal soul. These were the Sadducees. The Pharisees however believed in the resurrection of the dead, in Angels, in the Spirit World, and they believed that man had an immortal soul.

Christ, with the authority of the Son of God, and with all

the authority of Heaven itself reposing in Him, declared that there would be a resurrection of the dead, and He also clearly testified to an intermediate state in which the soul lives on after the death of the body, in the period between the death of the body and the resurrection. He did not refer to Greek philosophies and there was a divergency between those philosophies and the Truth of God which He revealed, but in as far as Greek philosophies agreed with what Christ taught and declared, of course these philosophies at that point pass from propositions to fact and truth for all who know Christ to be the inerrant Son of God, and the Lord of Life and Glory.

### **The Completed Revelation**

Since the end of the apostolic age when the New Testament writings were completed, the Church has had the wonder of “that which is perfect” (1 Cor. 13:10) — the Holy Scriptures of Truth, and woe to those who add to or diminish its contents. In the perfection of the completed revelation, the Old and the New Testaments blend perfectly, welded into a unique unit by the precious worth, in life, death and resurrection of the Christ of God, who is Himself “the revealer of the Father”, and the “light of men”. The Book we call “the Word of God” carries the authority of the One it calls “the Word of God” (Rev. 19:13), and as such it is the revealer of the nature of man, “For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

What then does the Word of the Lord reveal about the nature of man, about death, about the resurrection and about immortality?



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## A. THE NATURE OF MAN

### (a) The Body

There is general agreement that men have bodies. The Professors admit that they have bodies of flesh and bones and blood, and each Professor is able to consider "his" body and ascertain how many toes "it" has.

King David thought about his body and he said "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14), and he turned then to the Spirit God he had learned to know, who has no body, and he said "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written which in continuance (day by day) were fashioned when as yet there was none of them" (v. 16).

God formed the body of the first man, Adam, of the dust of the ground, and dust it is. There is nothing evil in the body of man, for though made of dust it was formed by the Holy Creator of the Universe. The body can become an instrument "of unrighteousness unto sin" (Rom. 6:13) when sin reigns in the mortal body, or it may be sanctified (1. Thess. 5:23) and yielded to God as an instrument of righteousness (Rom. 6:13).

The body is wonderfully efficient, but it is a physical thing, made of physical elements, known to the Professors and to science. God formed Adam of the dust of the ground, and as David said, each new born infant of the race receives a body "fearfully and wonderfully made", and the elements of the body are consistently the same —dust.

### (b) Mortality

The body of man is a mortal body. That is, it is subject to death. In Romans 6:12 and again in Romans 8:11 the Word refers to "your mortal bodies". In 1st Corinthians 15:53-54 he who has such a body is twice referred to as "this mortal". In 2nd Corinthians 4:11 there is reference to "our mortal flesh", and in 2nd Corinthians 5:4 we are told of a hope, "that what *is mortal* may be swallowed up of life" (R.V.).

These are the only six occasions in which the word "mortal" (Greek "thneetos") is used in the New Testament.

### (c) Immortality

As "mortal" in Scripture relates to the body, so the use of the word "immortality" (Greek "athanasia") also relates to the body in a condition in which death loses its control.

This word is used only three times, and once is applied to the Lord Jesus, in the words: "Our Lord Jesus Christ which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; *who only hath immortality*" (1. Tim. 6:14-16).

Accordingly we learn immediately that the body of our Lord Jesus

Christ, which did go into death, now has immortality, and that He *alone* hath immortality.

This was true when it was written, of course, and it is still true that He alone of all men hath immortality, for the bodies of all others who have died are at present still in death. He alone hath immortality now, but a time is coming when He will give it to others, for He not only *hath* it for Himself, but He has power, and He alone has power to give it to His redeemed.

Accordingly the two other uses of the word in Scripture, refer to Christ's bringing immortality to others at a future time. This is in 1st Corinthians 15:53-54. Two classes of Christians are in view, and in each case it is Christians only that are in view:

- (i) Those who have died and whose bodies are in the grave suffering "corruption". These will at the coming of Christ be raised "incorruptible".
- (ii) Those who are still alive on the earth at the time of Christ's coming, who have not, and will not suffer corruption, but whose condition is still that of "mortals". That is, they are people who have not died but who up till that time had been subject to death. The Record says of such, "this mortal shall put on immortality".

At the coming of Christ, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", and when "this corruptible (those who have died) shall have put on incorruption (group one above) and this mortal (those who are still alive) shall have put on immortality (group two above) then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written (in the Old Testament in Isaiah 25:8) Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

The change of the mortal to immortality is that described by Paul in writing to the Thessalonians thus: "*We which are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord*, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: *Then we which are alive and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Thus the mortal believer, alive and in the body at Christ's coming acquires and shares his Lord's immortality. After that change, that immortal body can never die.

#### **(d) Is the Body The Whole of Man ?**

"Rationalists", "Modernists" and some Theological Professors say yes, the body is the man, and accordingly when the body dies, that is the end, or man then ceases to exist.

Scripture, however, clearly reveals the body to be part only of the man. Sometimes the Scripture speaks of the body as the man, where physical life on this earth is particularly in view, but elsewhere the man is viewed as apart from his body. Here are some of the

words of Scripture, which refer to the man as existing apart from the body: "Whilst we are *at home in the body*" (2 Cor. 5:6); "Willing rather to be *absent from the body*" (2 Cor. 5:8); "The life that I now live *in the flesh*" (Gal. 2:20); "If I live *in the flesh*" (Phil. 1:22); "As being yourselves also in the body" (Heb. 13:3); "Knowing that shortly I must *put off this my tabernacle*" (2 Pet. 1:14); Whether *in* the body or *out of* the body I cannot tell" (2 Cor. 12:2).

It is accordingly true that *the Man* may exist or have consciousness, either "at home in the body", or "absent from the body". These things are purposefully contrasted in the Scriptures quoted. Paul speaks of being "in the body" or "out of the body".

"Out of the body" indicates a form of existence after death and before the resurrection, for after the resurrection Man will again be "in the body". Note that it is "the Man", the "I" who is either in the body or out of the body.

On the other hand, the body is part of the Man, and it is in order to refer to the body as the Man for some purposes, as in the use of language many wholes are called by their parts. We can speak of so many "sail", meaning "ships". So Scripture will sometimes speak of the Man as the body. Thus "And devout men carried *Stephen* to his burial" (Acts 8:2). Here the body is called the man. Yet Stephen said before he died, "Lord Jesus, receive *my spirit*" (Acts 7:59).

So the Lord, on the day of His crucifixion saw death, and His body was laid in the grave, but He was able to declare before He died that "this day" *He* would be "in Paradise". Further Christ declared that another man then still alive, would also that day be in Paradise with Him.

So a part, the body, lay in the grave, of the Lord, of Stephen, and of the thief who repented: but the "I", or the person, continued elsewhere, "apart from the body".

### **(e) What then is Man ?**

The Bible expounds or reveals the triune nature of man, in a consistent though developing way, from Genesis through to Revelation. Man is Spirit, Soul and Body. A simple statement in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 will satisfy the sincere Bible believing Christian, and will give him the key to many other passages of Scripture. This verse contains the statement, definitely and clearly that Man is "spirit *and* soul *and* body". The verse reads "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ". The apostle looks for the sanctifying of *all* of Man, and to make quite clear what he means, he breaks Man up into his three component parts, and intercedes that each part be preserved blameless - - spirit - - soul - - body.

God carefully enfolded this truth in the first two Chapters of the Bible. There it is stated that Man as to his body was "formed" of the dust of the ground, that Man as to his spirit was "created" in the

image of God, who is Spirit, and has no body, and finally that Man became "a living soul" (See Gen. 1:27 and 2:7). What then is the "spirit" and the "soul"?

### (f) The Spirit

As we have seen, Paul prays for the sanctification of the spirit, as well as of the soul and body. We know accordingly that this is not the Holy Spirit of God who indwells the Christian, that is referred to, for the Holy Spirit of God is infinitely holy and pure, and Paul would not pray for the making holy of the Holy Spirit. Also the new nature acquired at conversion is not what is meant, for this is "that which is born of the Spirit", and "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him and he *cannot* sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).

It is the created spirit that is part of Man that needs to be sanctified. This is the spirit of Man which with the soul indwells the body, while the Man is "in the body". The spirit of man which so indwells the body of mortal man, shares the body, if the Man is a Christian, with the Holy Spirit of God.

Thus Scripture declares, "What? Know ye not that *your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost* which is in you . . . therefore glorify God in your body, *and in your spirit*, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Such a Christian Man, indwelt by the Holy Spirit is a new creature in Christ Jesus, and yet he is still the same Man, the same spirit personality, still living in the same body he tabernacled in before his conversion or new birth, and he is still the same living soul, though now the possessor of eternal life through faith in Christ and the sublime completed sacrificial work of the Lord of Life who died for him.

God Himself is a Spirit, He has created Man in His image, and He is the "Father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9). "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. 104:30). "That created thee O Jacob" (Isa. 43:1). Moses addressed the Lord saying "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh set a man over the congregation" (Num. 27: 15-16). Zechariah says "The Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth *the spirit of man within him*" (Zech. 12:1).

Christ said "A spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). Solomon says that at death "The spirit returns to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). The Lord commended His spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46). The departed saints are "The spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23), and Scripture refers to the unrepentant dead as "spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:19).

God is a Spirit, the angels are spirit beings serving God in holiness, and the demons are spirits also, but unclean. Man also is spirit, and has power to participate in the world of spirits, and God intended him for fellowship with Himself.

Man who was intended for fellowship with God has no business to be communicating with evil spirits who are in rebellion against God. However in the exercise of his free will, Man has the ability to sin, and to commune with evil spirits. Spiritism's seances and some forms of Pentecostalism prove both Man's sinfulness and his capacity for spirit intercourse with spirits of the spirit world. How necessary it is that Christians should be instructed in such matters and remember that they "cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10:21) and that "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

That the spirit of Man is not just a general pervading influence which engulfs the human race is clear from all the Scriptures quoted above, but particularly from the following verses. With meticulous care Scripture speaks of "the spirit of man which is in him" (1 Cor. 2:11). However when a number of men is referred to, Scripture does not say "the spirit of men", but Scripture is careful to say "the spirits (plural) of men" (Heb. 12:23).

It is the spirit in man which primarily distinguishes him from the animals, who have bodies and souls, but not spirits created in the image of God. There is just one Scripture which at first glance appears to indicate that animals have spirits. This is Eccl. 3:21 "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

This passage is seized upon by the Rationalist and the Modernist, but the answer is very simple. This statement is not set forth as the truth of God, but it sets out Solomon's questionings in his heart. As Solomon pondered the meaning of life he gave expression to the doubts of his heart. He says "*Who knoweth* the spirit of man?" Solomon covers the vanities of human thinking and of the various philosophies of life, but then he disassociates these thinkings from the truth, and he concludes where all Scripture concludes that Man is accountable to God, and that God will judge every man, following the return of the dust to the earth as it was, and the return of the spirit to God who gave it.

If it is once accepted that God exists as Spirit, and also that angels and demons are spirits (without flesh and bones, as Christ has stated) then there should be no great difficulty in believing that Man who is spirit and soul and body, continues to exist when his body dies. Surely "the Father of spirits" who is Himself, Spirit, is able to receive the spirit of a man who dies! He *is* able, and saints of every age have echoed Paul's words, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12), and again, "I am persuaded that neither *death*, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come . . . shall be able to *separate* us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".

The spirit of Man is created "in the image of God" and accordingly it is that part of Man which is like God in personality and function. It is the spirit of Man that is capable of communing with God, of appreci-

ating and understanding God, and of worship. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

A careful study of the use of the word "spirit" in Scripture as relating to the spirit of Man, shows that it always has reference to that part of Man which controls the understanding, the intelligence and the functions of reasoning and judgment. Sometimes the Hebrew word employed is translated in our language "mind" e.g. "His mind hardened in pride" (Dan. 5:20).

The Scriptural meaning of the word is shown clearly in 1 Cor. 2:11 "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" It is the spirit of Man which is *in* the Man, that *knows* the things of the Man.

### (g) The Soul

The higher part of Man is the spirit of Man which has been created in the image of God. What then is the Soul?

God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the first man formed of the dust of the ground, "and man became *a living soul*" (Gen. 2:7).

Scripture speaks of the souls of animals, but a further distinction must be made between Man and the animals in that Scripture declares that God breathed into the nostrils of the Man *the breath of life* and *then* Man became a living soul. This is stated of Man only, and not of the animals.

Man thus shares with the animals a soul, but he differs from the animals in that Man has a soul relation with God which the animals have not. Scripture declares "all flesh is not the same flesh", and the soul of Man also is not the same as that of the animals.

Animals are not spirit beings, and on the other hand, angelic beings which have spirit-personalities, have no souls or bodies as the animals have. Scripture reveals the animals to have souls but not spirits, and the angelic beings are called "Spirits" but *never* "Souls".

Man is unique in that he has a body and a soul which he shares with all living creatures of the animal kingdom, and a spirit which he shares with the angelic hosts.

It is clearly the soul which unites the Man, linking the body formed, with the spirit "given", so that he becomes "a living soul".

In the animals the soul has a soul-body relationship only, and at death of the body, the soul is no more. But man's soul belongs to a God-breathed spirit life, and while the body may be killed, the soul of Man which is "a living soul" cannot be killed for it has its part also with a spirit life which survives the death of the body. Christ said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

In passages like this, the soul is distinguished from the body very clearly. The words cannot have any other meaning than that the body may be killed here now, while the soul will hereafter be account-

able to God in the Spirit World.

Again Christ said, "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25). "Life eternal" is always one word in Scripture (the Greek "zoe") and it is contrasted here with this present life "in this world". What is the "it" the "He" of this verse will "keep", "unto life eternal?" It is the soul, which is preserved at the death of the body.

The Soul, then, is that part of Man which relates the Spirit created, with the body formed, and which continues to exist in relation with the spirit, when the body dies.

A study of all the occasions where the soul is referred to in Scripture shows that the soul commands the emotions, affections, desires, the will, and the selecting of right and wrong, loving or hating.

If "mind" characterises the functions of the spirit, it is "the heart" that characterises the functions of the Soul. Scripture does not even once refer to "the brain" in the body of Man, and Scripture does not refer to the "head" in a functional sense. Man's doings and responsible functions are performed in Scriptural language as from the Mind or the Heart.

"*The Heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). It is instructive to realize that the heart which acts in this way, produces sin, which is called several times "the sin of the *Soul*", and atonement is accordingly necessary "for the Soul".

## **(h) The Soul and the Spirit**

Having considered briefly the distinguishing features of the spirit and the soul, let us now consider the unity of the person who is both spirit and soul. Scripture views this person sometimes as a mortal who is "in the body", and sometimes as he is after the change called "death", when he is "out of the body".

Whether "in the body" or "out of the body", Scripture never refers to a separation or parting between spirit and soul. The body may be separated from both, but spirit and soul do not part. It is true that the Word of God is "sharp and powerful" enough to "divide asunder" the two, and it does this in that it enables us to understand the differences between the two, the functions of each, their origin and relationship. But Man is revealed as a unity of spirit and soul, and he is never viewed apart as spirit only or as soul only. We can only understand reference to the soul in its Scriptural relationship with the spirit of man, and we can only understand references to the spirit of man in its Scriptural relationship with the soul.

While "in the body", the Man, who is Spirit and Soul and who "tabernacles" in the body is generally referred to in Scripture as "soul" rather than "spirit". For instance, the Rich Man in the parable talks to himself, and says "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry" (Luke 12:19). The Man is talking to himself and he calls himself "Soul".



This leads to the Scriptural concept of “Self”, the living soul of Man who is a spirit personality, indwelling in this life in a physical body.

### (i) Self

While here in the “mortal body”, soul and body are so closely related that “soul” and “life” appear to be the same, and there is a sense in which the soul is the life of the Man in his mortal body. “Mortal life” and “the soul” are nevertheless different concepts though the same Hebrew or Greek words are sometimes translated “soul” and sometimes “life” according to the obvious meaning of the passage.

In the use of language it is not uncommon for the same word to have different meanings, according to the way in which it is used, or the sense or context in which it is used. For instance in the English language, when we use the word “Canon”, we may mean either “a Church decree”, “the general law governing treatment of a subject”, “a criterion”, “list of Bible books accepted by the Church”, or “member of Cathedral Chapter”, and we must look to the context to determine what meaning is to be ascribed to the word in the setting in which we find it.

So it is with the Hebrew and Greek words which are translated “life” or “soul”. It is always the same word in the original texts but the meaning is variously translated in our English versions, as the context and the sense of the passage requires.

Thus in Luke 12:19 the Man in the parable says “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry”. Obviously it could not be translated or mean “*Life*, thou hast - - - be merry”. Similarly when Paul speaks of sanctification, the expression “spirit and soul and body” requires that “soul” equate with something in addition to the body. “Body” and “life” would not give an antithesis or an addition to the sense, for the body could only be sanctified if it had life. The word could not be translated “life”, but it is translated “soul”, for body and soul are completely different parts of the Man, both of which need to be sanctified.

Yet again in another setting it is right to translate the same word “life” — “Take no thought for your life” (Matt. 6:25).

As we have seen the thing that distinguishes man from the animals is that he has a spirit-soul life as well as a soul-body life and accordingly he is a moral responsible being. But as we have also seen, the thing that distinguishes man from all other moral spirit beings is that he has a *Soul*.

He is a *living* soul. This is the particular nature of man. It distinguishes him, and he is called and he calls himself a “Soul” accordingly.

Now while the Greek word “*psuche*” is sometimes translated “life” and sometimes “soul”, in many passages it carries this further significance, and the meaning is inescapable that in these passages it is “the person himself” — “the self” that is referred to.

The same is true of the equivalent Hebrew word used throughout the Old Testament, "nephesh". This is the only word used, and sometimes it is translated "the life", sometimes "soul" and "the person" or "Man" or "Self". The word is used a great many times and a study of the different uses abundantly shows that a third use of nephesh and psuche is an emphatic reference to the person of the man himself. "My soul" means "myself". The soul of a person is the person himself.

The expression "my soul" is used throughout Scripture. For instance Jacob said as he considered the evil doings of some of his sons "O my soul, come not thou unto their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united" (Gen. 49:6). Here Jacob is addressing himself. "O my soul" means "O Jacob".

The psalmist says "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that *my soul* knoweth right well" (Ps. 139:14). It means "he" knew right well — he himself. Does your soul know this right well? Do *you* know it yourself?

In this way we speak of so many "souls" on a ship. We say 60 souls are on the ship, not 60 bodies because we are thinking of the 60 persons who inhabit or tabernacle in the 60 bodies. The Souls *are* the Men who are travelling and transacting business on the ship.

Now while the soul is the self in the mortal field, after the death of the body, the soul does *not* characterise Scriptural reference to Man thereafter. In the body, the Man or the self is called "the soul". But in the World of spirits to which Man goes on the death of the body, Man is called "spirit" rather than "soul", except in two places (Psa. 16:10 and Rev. 6:9).

In common speech we refer to "departed spirits", rather than to "departed souls". And Scripture generally refers to "the spirits" of the dead, "The *spirits* of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23). "The *spirit* departs to God that gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). The Lord commended His *spirit* to the Father (Luke 23:46).

Accordingly, Scripture speaks frequently of the soul as the man while in the body, and it speaks principally of the spirit, as the man, when he has departed from the body.

## **(j) Sin**

The soul becomes "sensual" (Jude 19) if "not having the Spirit" (the Holy Spirit of God). Sin enters then, when the soul yields to "the lust of the flesh", or "the lust of the eyes" or "the pride of life". Peter speaks of "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

Sin affects and attaches to the whole man, spirit, soul and body, but it enters through the soul. Sin is accordingly spoken of as "the sin of the soul" (Mic. 6:7). For this reason it is thrice stated (Ex. 30:15, Lev. 17:11, and Num. 31:50) that atonement is made "for the soul". And Isaiah tells us that our atonement involved the making of "His (Christ's) soul an offering for sin".

### **(k) The Father of Spirits**

The spirit distinguishes man from the animal creation, and relates man in responsibility to God. This is the sense in which Adam, the first man, is called “the son of God” (Luke 3:38), and in which “we are also His offspring” (Acts 17:28). God is the “Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9), and He is “the God of the spirits of all flesh (Num. 16:22 and 27:16).

The angels are also called “Sons of God” (Job 1:6 and 38:7). They are “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14), and it is as spirits that both men and the angels, are sons of God and are accountable to Him accordingly.

The animals are not morally accountable to God in this way, and when a man forgets to account, he becomes like the beasts. “Man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish” (Psa. 49:20). God made an example of Nebuchadnezzar in this respect and when he forgot God and boasted in himself he was “driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws” until he learned “that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will” (Dan. 4:33 and 32).

“The beasts that perish” (Psa. 49:20) are distinguished from man who is spirit, and who does not perish.

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## B. DEATH

### (a) Spiritual Death

The Scriptures teach that all living mortals are dead spiritually, except they be quickened and vivified by Christ the Giver of life.

Man outside of Christ is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).

"Death passed unto all men for that all sinned" (Rom. 5:12 R.V.), and because of this, "sin reigned in death" (Rom. 5:21 R.V.). Sin reigns in death, and because of this "death reigned" (Rom. 5:17) in the annals of sinful men from Adam's day to the present.

Spiritual death involves separation from God, for sin separates, and the separation is the spiritual death. Man is "shapen in iniquity" (Ps. 51:5). "All have sinned (Rom. 3:23), "and the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). We are all "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3).

Man is born and may live his mortal life in the darkness of spiritual death. But "in Him (Christ) was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

Christ who is "the Resurrection and the Life" alone can bring life to those who are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins.

The tragedy of our times is that what God sees as spiritual death is widely regarded as the whole of life. Similarly there is widespread misunderstanding concerning physical death, which involves the continuity of life in another state, apostolically termed "out of the body" (2 Cor. 12:3).

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

### (b) Physical Death

It is usual to call a dead body a "dead man", and Scripture uses this common form of speech and we read "Come see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:6), and "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial (Acts 8:2).

But it was the body only, that was really in view, in both cases. The Lord had committed His spirit to the Father, and "He" was in Paradise, while His body lay in the grave. And while Stephen's body was being carried to burial, "he" was with the Lord Jesus to whom he had commended his spirit (Acts 7:59).

Peter speaks of death in the words "shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me" (2 Pet. 1:14), and Paul, in the words "For we know that *if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved*, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).

Note that at death, the tabernacle, not the person, is dissolved, and the person has provision made for him elsewhere.

Paul also a few verses later refers to death as being "unclothed"

(v. 4). That is, death is the laying aside of the clothing of the body that has invested the spirit and the soul.

Peter refers to death as his “departure” (2 Pet. 1:15). Accordingly death is the movement of the man from his body. He is in transit, and he “departs” from his body.

Paul again states that death is to be “absent from the body” (2 Cor. 5:8). And Paul states further and clearly, that for him, to be absent from the body, is to be “present with the Lord”. Paul also refers to seeing unutterable things but could not be sure whether he was “in” the body or “out” of the body. Death is being “out of the body”.

The Rich Man of the Lord’s account in Luke 16 died, and was buried (the death of the body) and in Hades (he, the Rich Man) lifted up his eyes, being in torment. No wonder the Lord says elsewhere “fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). This statement carries the Lord’s own warrant that the death of the body, is the death *only* of the body, and that the soul lives on after the death of the body.

### **(c) The Second Death**

The impenitent dead do not participate in the First Resurrection, but their spirits remain “in prison” during the one thousand years of the Millennial reign of Christ (1 Pet. 3:19 and Rev. 20:7).

The passage in Revelation 20 proclaims the resurrection of the just, following which is the binding and imprisonment of Satan, and the thousand years of Christ’s reign. Then follow events at the end of the thousand years, involving the release of Satan for “a little season”, and his final sentence and doom.

Then the record says, “And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH*. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

Note, however, that the second death has “no power” on those who have part in the *first* resurrection. Instead they are “blessed and holy” and “they shall be priests of God and of Christ” (Rev. 20:6).

## **C. EXISTENCE AFTER DEATH AND UNTIL THE RESURRECTION**

### **(a) The Immortality of the Soul**

This expression has no warrant as an expression from Scripture, but it has become a useful caption for referring to a wide range of Scriptural concepts. In a similar way, the words "the Trinity" are not to be found in Scripture. However, Scripture clearly teaches that the Godhead is one God, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, and it is perfectly legitimate to refer to Scriptural concepts so revealed by a convenient term to cover what we understand thereby. The term "Trinity" is a theological term which has advantage to refer to a Scriptural verity, though the term is not used in Scripture itself.

So it is with the expression "the immortality of the soul". The term as used by Christian orthodoxy over many centuries simply is a convenient term for reference to the truth of God relative to the continued existence of the person after the death of the body. Christians do not mean thereby what the Greek philosophers meant by the use of a similar expression, though as we have seen, in as far as the Greeks spoke of a life after death, there is a measure of agreement between the two. The main essential difference is that Scripture insists that man is spirit as well as soul, and the Greeks did not understand the difference between the two, the nature of each, nor God's eternal provision of an atonement for the soul, and the issues of eternal gain or loss. They did not understand the meaning of such expressions as "the forgiveness of sins", "honouring the Son", "in Christ", or "without Christ".

If we do, as orthodox Bible-loving people have done all down the years, and seek to learn only what the Scriptures have taught about existence after death, then we need have no scruples about referring to these truths under the general theological heading of "The Immortality of the Soul". What then does the Bible teach about the continued existence of man's spirit and soul, or of the man himself after death?

### **(b) Conscious Existence after Death**

Scripture contains nothing to suggest the idea of the "soul sleep" of some of the modern Church groups. Man exists consciously after death, whether he be saved or unsaved; whether he be "in Christ" and so "with Christ", or unrepentant and awaiting the Second Death.

True, there are references in Scripture to the body sleeping in death, to be awakened at the Resurrection: but it is the body that sleeps, not the soul.

The Lord expounds the conscious existence of the dead beyond the vale of tears, in the passage in Luke 16, from which passage the Modernists and Conditional Immortality theorists all excuse themselves.

Here Christ had been telling the Pharisees to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, "that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (Luke 16:9). Christ then told them

further, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (v. 13). Then He said "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (v. 15).

Here the Lord is teaching substantively that the "everlasting habitations" which God will appoint shall be in accordance with the life lived here.

Then the Lord draws the curtain of the unseen aside and illustrates His teaching by reference to the Rich Man and Lazarus.

The Lord had full knowledge of what is beyond. If He did not have this knowledge He would have been an imposter and a sinful man who could never become our Saviour. And if with this knowledge of the Unseen He told this story knowing it to be untrue and so left a wrong impression with all who heard it and with all the generations of mankind who have come after Him, then again His action could not possibly be justified.

The Pharisees believed in life in the Spirit World after death (though the Sadducees did not) and on several occasions the Lord who criticised the Pharisees in other ways approved their orthodoxy in matters of belief relative to the Spirit World, the Resurrection and kindred truths, as Paul did also in the years that followed.

The principle the Lord was teaching was that the after life related with this life. The moral was "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things", so "thou art tormented". The Rich man had served mammon and here was the consequence in the life after his death and his burial. He consciously suffered, he consciously was aware of the blessedness of others, and he consciously thought of his brethren still living on the earth.

Now note, that as Scripture does always, it interprets to finite minds things relating to the Unseen World, by the figures of things that are seen and known here in this world. So the reference to tongue, finger, and eyes are terms used to help us understand the fact that "eternal habitations" involve suffering or comfort according to the meaning of the life lived here in the body.

This conscious suffering and comfort was after this life, for the Lord declared they had died and He records the fact that the Rich Man's body was buried. Obviously the Lord is speaking of the position immediately after death, for he says of Lazarus that he died "and was carried of the angels to Abraham's bosom". The Lord is speaking of the condition of the Man in each case in the Intermediate State after death and before the Resurrection. If He had been referring to Man's condition after the Resurrection then reference would not have been made to the burial of the body while the Man lift up his eyes in Hades and while others were still living a mortal life on earth. If the Resurrection life had been depicted the Body and Man would have been united and all the terms used would have agreed with all Scripture says elsewhere of the Resurrection life.

### (c) Abraham After Death

The Beggar Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom on the death of his body. The Lord was speaking of one who had died but who at the time the Lord was speaking, was in the intermediate state "in Abraham's bosom". He was with Abraham who was blessed of God, and there Lazarus was "comforted". Now Abraham was then when the Lord spoke, and Abraham is still now, in the intermediate state. His body was buried in "The cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron — which is before Mamre" (Gen. 25:9). Where then was Abraham? The Lord said that Lazarus after death was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The bodies of Abraham and Lazarus lay buried, but Abraham and Lazarus themselves were both together in a condition of consciousness in which Lazarus was comforted.

But the Lord had more to say about Abraham's condition in His, the Lord's day. The Lord not only *approved* the right beliefs of the Pharisees about the continuity of life after death, but He also disapproved and disproved the Modernists and Conditional Immortality theorists of His day — the Sadducees. When these philosophers came to the Lord to question the continuity of life after death, and the Resurrection itself, the Lord spoke again about Abraham.

The Lord said "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead; but of the living" (Matt. 22:32).

Mark and Luke record further that it was "at the Bush" that God said this to Moses, when Abraham had been dead for over 500 years. So Christ is saying that 500 years after the death of Abraham and while his body was still in the grave, that Abraham was nevertheless consciously existing. Christ said:

(a) That God's words to Moses meant that at that time He was the God of Abraham

(b) That God is not the God of the dead but of the living

(c) That therefore Abraham was then at that time alive, though his body was dead.

This involves a repeated, or confirmatory statement by Christ, for in one passage He declared that Abraham was alive in the intermediate state in Moses' day and in the other passage with reference to the beggar Lazarus, that Abraham was still alive in the same intermediate state in Christ's own day.

Of course we have reference to Abraham's future state following the Resurrection in Hebrews 11. "He looked", in his day on earth "for a city whose builder and maker is God" (V10) and He and others named in this Chapter "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims *on the earth*. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country . . . that is, an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed



to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city" (VV 13-16).

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith *received not the promise*" (V 39). That is their present position is in the intermediate state — not yet receiving the promise of all they looked for — "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (V 40).

That is, all Christ's own shall be made perfect (spirit, soul and body) at the Resurrection at the Coming of Christ. Meantime the condition of the intermediate state continues for them.

#### **(d) Eternal Habitations**

All men are at death "received" unto eternal habitations. The Rich Man and Lazarus only illustrate the direct certain teaching of the Lord to the people he addressed. He declared to those who lived for material things, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that *when you fail* (that is when ye die) they may receive you into everlasting habitations". The Rich Man is seen in the eternal habitations of the mammon of unrighteousness. When was he received? At his death.

The lost are held thus until the Second Resurrection as Revelation 20 reveals. In the Intermediate State Scripture refers to them as "spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:19) even as the "angels who sinned" are "delivered into chains of darkness" while "reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). The prophet Isaiah by inspiration looks to the same period of final judgment and refers to the "host of the high ones" and "the kings of the earth" who "shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison" (Isa. 24:21-23).

#### **(e) Handle Me and See**

After His death, Christ's body was placed in the tomb while He Himself was that day "in Paradise".

But after three days and three nights, Christ rose from the dead, and on the evening of that resurrection day He suddenly appeared in the midst of His disciples. "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*" (Luke 24: 37-39).

The disciples believed in spirits of the spirit world. They knew Christ had died and on His sudden appearance were disturbed thinking they had seen a spirit which is ever a frightening thing to mortal men.

The interesting thing for our present purposes is that Christ in His Resurrection form approved their thinking concerning spirits. He said clearly "a spirit hath not flesh and bones". Christ confirmed again in this way that spirit beings are persons existing without bodies.

He Himself had lived as a man and died. He had for three days

entered the so-called intermediate state and had been occupied with the work of God in the Spirit world. But now He appeared with His body again, and it was the same body even to the nail prints, and was composed of flesh and bones and His disciples were able to recognise Him and to know the Lord. Yet again, it was the same body changed in that it had qualities a mortal body does not have. He appeared "the doors being shut" and He "vanished out of their sight".

But Christ in His Resurrection form, confirmed to the disciples that there is a spirit form of existence from which His form differed. Christ allays their fears by showing that He has a body, and so is not appearing as a spirit, by which he clearly means a person without a body, one who is in the intermediate state.

### **(f) Angels and Spirits**

A "spirit" as the Lord used the word in the passage last referred to is in New Testament language a spirit of a man separated from his body. Angels are holy spirit beings of another order in the purposes of God: Luke says in Acts 23:8 "for the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, *neither angel nor spirit*; but the Pharisees confess *both*". The Pharisees say in another place "if a *spirit or an angel* hath spoken unto him let us not fight against God". And Paul the apostle approved and endorsed the beliefs implicit in these statements as his Master did. Luke also is giving his consent to these beliefs when he states that the Pharisees "*confess*" both.

With Scripture interpreting itself in this way, it should be easy to see what is meant by:—

"Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise"

"Lord Jesus receive my spirit"

"The spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23)

"The spirit shall return to God that gave it".

### **(g) To Die is Gain**

Paul said "For me to live is Christ, and *to die is gain*. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour, (this is worth while) yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt the two, having a desire *to depart* and be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless *to abide in the flesh* is more needful for you" (Phil. 1:21-24).

To childlike simple faith these words are clear and certain in their meaning and import.

But the intellectual monsters of our age quibble and provoke the itching ears of one another with their various and conflicting "explanations".

The Conditional Immortality theorists say that at death the soul goes into unconsciousness until the resurrection. The annihilationists say that death is the final end of all life. Both have to explain how death could be gain when the alternative of living "in the flesh"

is acknowledged to be worth while. How can sleep and unconscious inactivity or non-existence be better than "worth while" living on the earth? And if they had the choice between the two would they really choose the King of Terrors while acknowledging that that King leads only to unconsciousness or non-existence! How could they say it was "far better"?

There are only *two* alternatives before Paul. He says "*to me*" (1) "to live is Christ" and (2) "to die is gain". Then he follows with the statement "I am in a strait betwixt *the* two" (R.V.). Or if the authorised version is preferred "I am in a strait betwixt *two*". Not "three" and not any other than the two named for he then names them again (a) "having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" and (b) "nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you".

Now Paul "*desired*" to depart and be with Christ which is far better and his strait or his difficulty was that he felt it necessary for the sake of others to continue his worth while life in the flesh. The life beyond was so attractive to Paul that he *desires* it because he knew it was "*far better*". As he said elsewhere he knew that to be "absent from the body" was to be "present with the Lord".

Thus "departing and being with Christ" can only mean that which occurs at death. And the alternative "abiding in the flesh" can only mean his continued mortal life on the earth.

The word "depart" in this setting can only mean that Paul speaks of vacating his body at death and leaving it and this world behind to go "to be with Christ which is far better".

The best the intellectual braves can do with this is to try to make out another use for the Greek word and translate it "the returning" and read it "having a desire for the returning and being with Christ". That is, they say Paul desired "sleep" so that at the "returning" of Christ (at the Resurrection) he would *then* be with Christ which is far better. But if this were so why not continue with the "worth while" present life and only finally fall on sleep, for the end result of the resurrection follows the same in each case. And of course the idea of "the Returning" does not suit the Modernistic Annihilationist, in any case!

But the word cannot mean "The Returning", for the derivative "analysis" is used by Paul again elsewhere in 2 Tim. 4:6 where the reference can only be to his death. Here he says "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of *my departure* is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course". Paul's death is here referred to as "*my departure*" beyond all possible question, and the only possible meaning of "to depart" by the same apostle in the closely knit context of Philippians 1:23 is that there also it refers to his death.

#### **(h) Absent from the Body**

For good measure the Scriptures afford further proof. Paul, who "was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:4) and who received an

“exceeding greatness” (R.V. ) of revelations (V7) says that at the time he had the experience of being caught up into Paradise he did not know whether he was then “in the body or out of the body” (V3).

But earlier in the same Epistle Paul used the same expressions thus:— “knowing that whilst we are *at home in the body we are absent from the Lord*” (2 Cor. 5:6). Then he says “willing rather to be *absent from the body* and to be *present with the Lord*” (V8).

If we are present with the Lord only in the Resurrection, how then can we be “absent from the body”? For Paul insists that while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord, but that when we are with the Lord then we are absent from the body.

Paul is obviously speaking of the intermediate state which follows death and fills the interim between death and the resurrection of the body.

All the above references agree harmoniously together and they give to faith a clear sure basis for the knowledge necessary to confirm to us that after death, conscious existence continues.

### **(i) Moses at the Transfiguration of Christ**

All the above references are to conscious existence beyond the tomb as viewed from this scene. Let us now consider the testimony of Moses who returned to this scene 1500 years after his death, when Elijah and he talked with Christ about “the death which He should accomplish at Jerusalem”.

Moses is the man God addressed at the Burning Bush telling him that He the Lord, was the God of Abraham who had then been dead for 500 years. Moses later died in Mt Nebo, and 1500 years later we have confirmation that he still existed, that he existed consciously, that he could engage in a conversation and that he could be recognised and acknowledged as Moses by Christ and Elijah and this in circumstances that three other men, Peter, James and John, then still in their mortal bodies of flesh, were left in no doubt as to his identity.

The transfiguration of Christ and the appearance of Moses and Elijah was not a parable. It was not something Christ told the disciples about. It is something for which we have the corroborated testimony of three men whom the Church of God accepts, approves and believes — Peter, James and John.

It was not a vision, for the record says they saw what was already occurring — Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah when “they awoke”. They had been asleep, and they had no dream, but when they awakened, there they saw something that had been in action unknown to them till they awoke. “But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were *awake* they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him” (Luke 9:32).

Further, Moses was not in his resurrection body, for at that time Christ had not died, and Scripture insists that Christ Himself and He alone is the first-born from the dead. (Col. 1:18 and other passages).

Moses still awaits the great Resurrection Day, but meantime he

has conscious and blessed existence, as Abraham has and as Paul has. Paul is now with Christ, which is far better than even his worth while life in the flesh in which he fought a good fight and finished his course. And the myriads of the redeemed who have gone before are all there in conscious blessedness, in the "far better" place. Yet, even so, they are not yet "made perfect", "God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40). They and we await the consumation. All the redeemed of the Lord await that glad day.

## **(j) Sheol, Hades and Paradise**

These three names are used in Scripture with reference to the intermediate state.

The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament for the Place of departed spirits is Sheol. In the New Testament the Greek Hades (often translated Hell in the authorised version) is the exact counterpart of the Hebrew Sheol. Sheol and Hades are the same.

The other word "Paradise" is used once by the Lord and once by Paul.

Hebrew scholars say that the word Sheol devolved from the word "shoal" which means "to ask". Some say that the word depicts the way death "demands" its prey. Others say that it is derived from the "questioning" which has always exercised man's thoughts concerning the dead, as Job expresses it — "man giveth up the ghost, and where is he" ? (Job 14:10).

Hades in the Greek can only carry the significance of the "unseen" or "the invisible". In the Greek language generally it means the region of departed spirits. The Lord Himself and all the New Testament writers used the word as it is used in Greek literature generally.

Hades *never* means the grave. Scripture on the other hand distinguishes between Hades and the Grave in exactly the same way it distinguishes between Soul and Body. Scripture speaks of "*death and Hades*" as two separate kingdoms.

For instance at the end of the intermediate state Scripture declares "death *and* Hades delivered up the dead that were in "*them*" (Rev. 20:13) and the Lord is referred to in Acts 2:27 thus: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption". That is, the Soul and Hades relate, and His body and death relate. Peter interpreted this quotation from the Old Testament by saying "He seeing this before spake of His resurrection that His soul was not left in hades neither His flesh did see corruption" (V. 31).

"Hades" is a word used only eleven times in the New Testament and eight of these uses are clear uses of the word as above. Once the word is used in the expression "the gates of Hades" (Matt. 16:18). Twice the Lord says "Thou Capernaum shalt be brought down to Hades". These are figurative uses of the word.

The Lord's use of the word "Paradise" is very enlightening. He said to the repentant thief "verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt

be with Me in Paradise”.

He named the place in which He would be found after death, and the place where He would be on the very day of His death.

The thief had requested “Lord remember me *when* thou comest in Thy Kingdom”. He says in effect “I will remember you not only when I come in my kingdom” but “*today* thou shalt be with me in Paradise”. The word “today” carries the force of “this very day” and in the Greek the word means as the English word does, that the day is the day now present and it cannot refer to a day not present when the word is spoken.

Note that it is as from Christ’s death that Paradise is referred to as the dwelling place for the Christian after death. Hades gives place to other expressions for the Christian. He is “caught up to Paradise” or is “with Christ” or “with Me in Paradise”, or “present with the Lord”.

### (k) “With Christ”

For the Christian, to be absent from the body is to be “present with the Lord” or “with Christ”.

What does this mean?

Well, first, Paul tells us that to depart and be with Christ is “*far better*” (Phil. 1:23).

This “far better” life is in a “habitation of God’s building in the heavens”, and this involves what was mortal being swallowed up of life. That is, eternal life begun in the body, in the far better eternal God-made Habitations of the Spirit, becomes the whole of life — swallowing up all other. (Sec. 2 Cor. 5:1-4).

God effects this for us who are Christ’s, “when the earthly house of this tabernacle” (V. 1) is dissolved, and we have the Holy Spirit in our lives, here and now, as an earnest or part fulfilment to prove to our Heart’s satisfaction that these things are as God has said (V. 5).

Now we walk by faith and need this help. But *then* by sight.

But beyond all this, *the* great thing is, that in this far better, eternal spirit Habitation of God’s making where life is blessed and holy, we shall *see* and be *with* Christ our Lord. We shall be *with* Him and an appreciation of the glory of this depends on our appreciation of Him.

What is it to be with *Christ*? For us it will mean that we shall be as He is, holy, righteous, just, for we shall be “like Him”, (1 John 3:2). But Christ Himself who makes us “like Him”, is the incomparable Christ, the altogether lovely One, Fairer than the children of men.

Why is to be with Christ far better? — Because “I am my beloved’s and His desire is towards me” (S. of S. 7:10).

### (l) In Prison

Those who do not love the Saviour and who refuse to honour Him can have no place “with Him”. Would they wish it, if He is not beloved of them?

But Christ is with God, and those who are Christ’s are with Him

before God. This is only possible through the blood of Christ, through faith and through the grace of God who accepts only those who know the Lamb of God whom they make their Saviour and Lord. Those who so honour the Redeemer pass from death to life and when they depart this body they are then "for ever with the Lord".

All who do not so receive the Lord as Saviour but reject His claims or disregard them, have dishonoured the Lord who died for them, and God has said that He will dishonour those who dishonour the Son. The wrath of God rests on such and at death their spirits do not pass to be with the Lord but instead they become spirits in prison awaiting the second Resurrection and the Second Death.

Between the First and Second deaths Scripture does raise the veil of the unseen Spirit world enough to warn us not to be found in the estate of the lost.

The Lord depicted the present state of those in prison in His account of the Rich Man, who died and was buried and in Hades lifted up his eyes in torment (Luke 16).

Christ "by the Spirit" preached to the unrepentant in Noah's day before the flood "when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (for over a century the Spirit pleaded and God's long suffering was exercised) but only Noah and his family were saved, and all the rest of mankind perished. Now Peter tells us that these same lost souls who resisted the Spirit's pleadings and God's long-suffering, are *Spirits in Prison*. (See 1 Peter 3:18-20).

What is the condition of lost spirits "in prison"? As criminals arrested await trial and judgment, with their sentence beyond that again, so also the Lost in the intermediate state are Spirits in prison, awaiting a resurrection unto judgment.

Peter says further, that as the world of Noah's day "being overflowed with water perished", so the heavens and the earth which are now "are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:6-7).

What is the outlook and condition of the spirits in prison? — It is that of those who know that the final judgment is still to come — "a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (V. 31).

The Spirits in prison are conscious, in torment, fearful and held bound for judgment of which their expectation is certain and terrible.

## D. RESURRECTION

### (a) The Resurrection of Christ

The Christian hope and faith centres upon the fact of the resurrection of Christ.

After Christ's death on the cross, His body was taken down and laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, while Christ's spirit was that day in Paradise, as we have seen.

The resurrection of Christ involved a return of Christ from Paradise, union again with His holy body, and the appearance of the whole man, Christ Jesus our Lord, in bodily presence, powerfully alive and active.

It was in the body which died and was buried, that He was now alive, for the testimony was complete that the tomb was empty. The tomb contained the linen clothes in which the body had been wound and apart from them a little was the head wrapping. But the body was not there.

He died.

He was buried.

But the third day the body was not there — not in the tomb.

Christ's *body* was, however, seen the same day. He was alive, and "He showed unto them His hands and His side" (John 20:20).

It was the same body yet it had a quality it did not have before His death and resurrection for He came "and stood in the midst", "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled" (V. 19) And again after clearly making Himself known that same day to two people at Emmaus "He vanished out of their sight" (Luke 24:31).

Now if perchance He had *not* died but only remained unconscious in the tomb for three days His resuscitated body would have been as before — a human body subject to physical laws. But now He revealed the same body which died with different powers and qualities. It was the same body, identifiable as such, "with flesh and bones" but with spiritual power unknown among mortals.

The Angel sent by God, who sat upon the stone that had been rolled from the entrance of the tomb, said plainly "He is not here for He is risen as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:6). No wonder the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb, beholding the Angel of the Lord, his countenance like lightning in his raiment white as snow, now sitting on the stone he had rolled back from the door, did shake for fear of him and became "as dead men" (V. 4).

The Angel announced and directed it be told

- (i) "He is risen
- (ii) from the dead" (Matt. 28:7).

We accordingly have the testimony of the Angel of the Lord both to the fact that He died and that He rose again.

We have secondly the testimony of the *nature* of the appearances of our Lord which confirm (1) It was truly the Lord's body, but (2) It



was a risen body different from the mortal bodies of mortal men. Not a spirit, but a man with a body, and not just a natural body, but a body with spiritual power.

Thirdly we have the testimony of unimpeachable witnesses, carefully selected by our God to satisfy every right enquiry of men as to the truth of these things. There are *many* witnesses, testifying to *many* appearances of our Lord during a period of 40 days between His resurrection and His ascension. There is one notable appearance *after* the ascension to Paul who was the persecutor of them who believed in the risen Christ. Paul did not believe until a light and a voice revealed the risen Lord. Later Paul himself marshalled the evidence for the help of others.

Writing in the third decade after the resurrection Paul declared that though many of the witnesses had died, over half of them (more than 250) were then still alive and able to testify.

These witnesses included men from all walks of life. Some were simple souls, others scholarly but all testified with obvious truthfulness just to the fact of the risen Christ. Sometimes it was the testimony of an appearance to one man by that man; sometimes to two persons, sometimes to 12 or to all the Apostles, and on one occasion to 500 all gathered together, who all saw, and all testified. The Lord appeared specially to one of the sons of Mary and Joseph — His brother James and James became a “Pillar” in the early Church thereafter, whereas before His death and resurrection the earthly family with which the Lord was connected would not recognise His true position.

In one of His appearances after His resurrection Christ said this: “These are the words which I spake unto you, *while I was yet with you*, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44). “Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus is behoved Christ to suffer, *and to rise from the dead the third day*: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name . . . *and ye are witnesses of these things*” (VV. 45-48).

In the first Gospel Sermon preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost to the multitude in Jerusalem he said “This Jesus hath God raised up whereof *we all are witnesses*” (Acts 2:32) and he said further “God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ” (V. 36).

Finally the Lord appeared in His glorified ascended form to the aged apostle John on the Isle of Patmos “on the Lord’s Day”. John fell at His feet “as dead” and the Lord said “I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades” (Rev. 1:18). John had known Him in the days of His earthly ministry and before He suffered and died, and though John was overcome with the awe of His resplendent majesty and glory, he confirmed nevertheless that he recognised Him and knew Him and he wrote the last book of the Bible at his Lord’s command testifying in

doing so, that the One who so revealed Himself was “Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by His own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

### **The Importance of Christ’s Resurrection**

“*If Christ be not risen*” (1 Cor. 15:14)

*THEN*

- (i) “Our preaching is vain” (V. 14)
- (ii) “Your faith is also vain” (V. 14)
- (iii) The witnesses to Christ’s resurrection “are false witnesses of God” (V. 15)
- (iv) “Ye are yet in your sins” (V. 17)
- (v) There is no resurrection for us (V. 18)
- (vi) “They also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (V. 18)
- (vii) We have hope in Christ in this life only (V. 19)
- (viii) We are of all men most miserable (V. 19).

Belief in the resurrection of Christ is part of the saving faith of the Gospel, for the Word says “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, *and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9).

If there is no resurrection of Christ we are still in our sins in accordance with 1 Cor. 15:17 and if we do not *believe* that God raised Him from the dead in accordance with Rom. 10:9 how can we be saved from our sins?

The infidel who says that Christ did not rise is shutting his eyes and understanding to the most compelling testimony with which any event may be attested, and in the doing of this he takes the awful position of barring the way to his own soul’s salvation.

Here then is the importance of the fact of the resurrection. It is the central bastion of Christianity.

Those who are His, will rise in a coming day because He has risen.

The salvation of believers is sure because He rose from the dead. They are *not* in their sins because Christ has died for those sins and risen in power and triumph over all that is the cause and effect of sin.

The dead in Christ have *not* perished. Our preaching is *not* vain. Our faith is *not* vain. God has *no* false witnesses of the resurrection. The Angels told the truth and so did the disciples. And, Christian, your heart, taught of the Holy Spirit, is a true witness of the resurrection when it confirms the Power of His resurrection in your life.

Of all men most miserable? Nay! Christ is alive, and the Christian rejoices and revels in the wonder of this transforming realisation, only longing to know Him the better, and to experience more and more the power of His resurrection (see Phil. 3:19).

### **(b) The First Resurrection**

Scripture teaches that Christ rose from the dead to a glorious and powerful life and further, that all who are His, shall in a coming day

partake of a similar resurrection and so shall partake of His life and glory and power in quickened bodies, incorruptible, immortal.

In that great chapter on the resurrection, the 15th of 1st Corinthians, Paul commences a new paragraph with the words "But now is Christ risen from the dead, the *first fruits* of them that are asleep" (V. 20).

### Christians Only

"*Blessed and holy* is he that hath part in *the first* resurrection. On such the second death hath no power" (Rev. 20:6).

The passage in Revelation 20 makes it clear that there is a considerable period between the first and the second resurrections of the dead and that only those who are Christ's "have part" in the first resurrection. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished (V. 5). As we shall see the second resurrection is of the lost and leads to the Second Death. The first resurrection is "Christ the first fruits, then *they that are Christ's* at His coming (1 Cor. 15:23).

### The Nature of the First Resurrection

Christ's body was absolutely holy as was all of His blessed person, and God did not suffer it to see corruption. Christ's "soul was not left in Hades nor did His flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:31). David's body, however, has seen corruption and this has happened to all the righteous dead.

Now as Christ's body was exactly the body of flesh with its nail prints and general form and substance, changed nevertheless to a spiritual body having powers a mortal body does not have — so will the resurrection bodies of those "that are Christ's", be the same bodies changed to be like His. The only difference is that the change will be a greater change, from corruption (which He did not share) to incorruption (which is shared with Him).

The fact that those who have fallen asleep in Christ have suffered corruption creates difficulty in the minds of the sceptics. They quote instances to show that in the return of the body to dust some elements that were part of one body might conceivably become part of another living person's body, and like the Sadducees they ask "And whose shall she be in the resurrection"?

It should be remembered that this change of elements is going on in living mortal bodies all the time and that each mortal completely changes every speck of his bones and substance every seven years at least, and that the man of today is composed of completely different elements from the same man of seven years ago. But still, the body he has is still *his* body, and it is the same body he had seven years ago though its elements have changed. Go further, and allow that some of the elements that seven years ago were part of your body, are now part of someone else's body; Does this mean that the other person is you? It makes no difference.

Now what is happening in nature all the time is no difficulty to our God. Tom Jones is Tom Jones throughout life no matter what happens to his bodily composition and he never has any trouble in identifying his own body. And at the resurrection Tom Jones is still Tom Jones and not John Robinson.

Paul points out that this is constant in plant life. "Every seed his own body" (Cor. 15:38). Wheat, though it dies, produces wheat again and not rice. The *elements* may be cremated or scattered or changed, but the *body* is in God's keeping, and the body that dies, is the body that is raised at the resurrection.

*The same, but changed.*

- (1) Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption.
- (2) Sown in dishonour, raised in glory.
- (3) Sown in weakness, raised in honour.
- (4) Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body (1 Cor., 15:42-44).

The natural body is the mortal body which relates us with Adam the first man who "was made a living soul". The body raised at the resurrection is this body "made spiritually alive" by the "last Adam" (Christ) who has brought into being a new order in which He is Himself the first fruits.

Christ was made in the likeness of men with a human body, though He was God. Now at the resurrection Man is to share with Him a spiritual body of another order.

As Christ shared our humanity, so we shall share His power and glory at the resurrection. The resurrection body will link with Adam the first man, (firstly) in form and identity but more importantly with Christ, the last Adam, in spiritual power and glory.

### **When Will the First Resurrection Occur ?**

Here are the simple words of Scripture:—

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto *the coming of the Lord* shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: *and the dead in Christ shall rise first*: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thes. 4:15-17).

Accordingly the first resurrection occurs:—

#### **(i) *At the Coming of Christ.***

Hundreds of references to the coming of Christ indicate that all the prophecies describing the time that Christ will come are now being fulfilled, and the coming of Christ must be *very soon*.

The resurrection of the "dead in Christ" occurs at that moment.

(ii) It immediately precedes the rapture of the living Christians, as the change to immortality is often called. The dead rise first, then

we who are alive are “caught up” and “changed”.

(iii) Suddenly — in a moment — in the twinkling of an eye.

“Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, *and the dead shall be raised incorruptible*, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

The Lord went to great trouble to clearly portray the nature of the times and the signs that would portend His coming and the first resurrection. One of the signs is that all the signs will be widely disregarded by mankind.

The Lord Himself declared that His coming would be both sudden, and unexpected.

He said “*as the lightning*” (Luke 17:24) and He said “Watch therefore — lest *coming suddenly* He find you sleeping” (Mark 13:35-36).

(iv) *Unexpectedly*

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married — until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:26-30).

“In such an hour *as ye think not* the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:44).

(v) *Long before the Second Resurrection*

Only those “*who sleep in Jesus*” will God bring with Him (1 Thes. 4:14).

“*The rest of the dead* lived not until the thousand years should be finished” (Rev. 20:5).

A period of one thousand years, generally referred to as “the Millennium” separates the two resurrections — the resurrection of the just — and the resurrection of the lost.

### **(c) The Second Resurrection**

On this dread subject the Scriptures declare:—

“And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

## E. ETERNAL LIFE

Man is mortal, not immortal though living mortals who are His will be clothed with immortality when Christ comes for His saints.

While man is mortal, he has a soul which does not die because it is linked with a spirit created in the image of God and given by God. In this sense man is said to have an immortal soul, for though the body is subject to death, the soul is not. All men both saved and unsaved have souls which live for ever. But only the redeemed of the Lord — His Own — have “eternal life” in the sense in which Scripture uses this expression.

All souls of men continue for ever, but the lost live on in the eternal state in the Lake of Fire and Scripture calls this “The Second Death” as we have seen. The conscious suffering of eternal death is the portion of those who have in this life rejected the Son of God who died for them. On the other hand eternal life is assured now and for ever for those who trust the Saviour and who shelter under the Blood of the Lamb, and this is Life in the sense that God means Life — Life that is holy, perfect, complete, blessed, and with Christ — eternally.

This life is begun here and now and a man either has this life or he has it not. It distinguishes “Christ’s Ones”. Those who have it, are His, and at death they depart the body to be present with the Lord. At the first resurrection they are raised incorruptible and thereafter reign with Him sharing His glory and His inheritance in the Heavens. They are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

The redeemed of the Lord can say in the words of the Apostle John “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (John 5:11). “This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent” (John 17:3). “He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life” (John 3:36).

“*But*” (R.V.) “he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

Here is the destiny of Man’s immortal soul — life eternal or the wrath of God abiding on him.

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near”.

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:6-7).

### The Soul’s Choice

The Scriptures herein set forth show to any discerning mind that man’s destiny of eternal life or eternal death is determined in this life here and now, and it may be known whether the wrath of God still abides upon a soul or whether there has been a quickening change

which is the commencement of life eternal. Those who have received and entered upon this God-given life, should know it. How? By the witness of The Holy Spirit of God within confirming the Truth of God that they have been "accepted in the Beloved". Christ's sacrificial death covers their souls, and the Risen Christ becomes Lord and Master for this life and for ever. This witness is confirmed by subsequent knowledge and experience as He reveals Himself in directing the life and in enriching it. He reveals His will in matters of life and practice, faith, worship and service; and there develops a God-given hatred of sin and of all that displeases God and a love of the good, the right, the holy, the pure and of that which is God honouring and Christ exalting.

Has your immortal soul found eternal life?

Are you one of the "whosoever" of John 3:16 which reads "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that *WHOSO-EVER* believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"?

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him" . . . "All we like sheep have gone astray, . . . and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:5-6).

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

The Author will be pleased to hear from anyone who is seeking help concerning these issues or from anyone with genuine difficulties of faith and teaching.

"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

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U.S.A. or Canada	*****	*****	60c	40c
<b>THE DOCTRINE OF GOLD</b>				
N.Z.	*****	*****	75c	50c
Stg.	*****	*****	7/6d	5/-d
U.S.A. or Canada	*****	*****	\$1.00	60c
<b>THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY</b>				
N.Z.	*****	*****	25c	15c
Stg.	*****	*****	2/6d	1/8d
U.S.A. or Canada	*****	*****	30c	20c

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