

Present Truth

The *Bible alone* as the only rule of faith and practice; *faith alone* as the only means of acceptance with God; and *Christ alone* as the only mediator between God and men.

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Editorial Introduction:

The Grace of Life – p. 3

Letters – p. 4

The Last Enemy – p. 5

Is the Soul of Man Immortal – p. 10

Between Death and Resurrection – p. 16

Individual and Cosmic Eschatology – p. 19

Additional Testimony – p. 28

Present Truth is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation. It is especially committed to upholding the truth of justification by faith in this time when it is being threatened by humanism, emotionalism, and ecumenism. Our publication is based on the principle of *sola Scriptura* – the Bible and the Bible only as a rule of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-17). We desire to give the gospel trumpet a certain sound (1 Cor. 14:7-9), that through words easy to be understood (Hab. 2:2) people may “be established in the present truth” (2 Pet. 1:12) and like Noah be proclaimers of

the righteousness of Christ (2 Pet. 2:5).

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*** = WE ALREADY HAVE**

Editorial Introduction:

The Grace of Life

Life as we know it falls far short of life as it was meant to be. When God created mankind he endowed Adam and Eve with the power to think and to do and with the potential of living eternally surrounded by everything desirable. Adam chose death and all of us participate in that choice. But through the grace of God in Christ death has been abolished, and life and immortality have been brought to us through the Gospel. How we partake of these blessings of grace is the theme of this issue of **Present Truth**.

The authors we include in this issue come from a variety of backgrounds. If it weren't for their love of God and his Word they would never be found fellowshiping together. Oscar Cullmann hails from the European Reformed camp, Robert Kramer is a pastor in the Evangelical Congregational Church, Philip Hughes taught at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and our former editor traversed the theological spectrum from perfectionism to anti-perfectionism. But they all challenge us to examine the fallacy of the Greek dualism that pervades our world and our churches.

If we have missed your communion or favorite author then we conclude with a couple pages of quotations from other scholars beyond those represented in the preceding articles.

Life comes to us only through the grace of God. Praise God for his marvellous grace: grace that sent his Son to earth; grace that moved the Son towards death; grace that brings the Spirit to proclaim deliverance to those who all their lifetime are "subject to bondage."

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ..." 1 Peter 1:13.

Let's search the Scriptures together.

RAM

The Last Enemy

by Oscar Cullmann *

* Oscar Cullmann, formerly New Testament professor at the University of Basel, commenting in his preface to the 1958 English edition of *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* (from which this article is taken [available on line at jjburette.com]) writes:

“No other publication of mine has provoked such enthusiasm or such violent hostility... My critics belong to the most varied camps... So far, no critic of either kind [sincere Christian or philosophical non-Christian] has attempted to refute me by exegesis [Scripture proof], that being the basis of our study...

“This remarkable agreement seems to me to show how widespread is the mistake of attributing to primitive Christianity the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul. Further, people with such different attitudes as those I have mentioned are united in a common inability to listen with complete objectivity to what the texts teach us about the faith and hope of primitive Christianity, without mixing their own opinions and the views that are so dear to them with their interpretation of the texts. This inability to listen is equally surprising on the part of intelligent people committed to the principles of sound, scientific exegesis and on the part of believers who profess to rely on the revelation in Holy Scripture...

“...[There] is no reason for denying a radical difference between the Christian expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul. However sincere our admiration for both views, it cannot allow us to pretend, against our profound conviction and against the exegetical evidence, that they are compatible...

“...I do not under-estimate in any way the difficulty one may experience in sharing this faith, and I freely admit the difficulty of talking about this subject in a dispassionate manner. An open grave at once reminds us that we are not simply concerned with a matter of academic discussion. But is there not therefore all the more reason for seeking truth and clarity at this point?...”

Introduction

If we were to ask an ordinary Christian today (whether well-read Protestant or Catholic, or not) what he conceived to be the New Testament teaching concerning the fate of man after death, with few exceptions we should get the answer: ‘The immortality of the soul.’

Yet this widely-accepted idea is one of the greatest misunderstandings of Christianity. There is no point in attempting to hide this fact, or to veil it by reinterpreting the Christian faith. This is something that should be discussed quite candidly. The concept of death and resurrection is anchored in the Christ-event (as will be shown in the following pages), and hence is incompatible with the Greek belief in immortality; because it is based in *Heilsgeschichte* [salvation-history] it is offensive to modern thought. Is it not such an integral element of the early Christian proclamation that it can neither be surrendered nor reinterpreted without robbing the New Testament of its substance?

But is it really true that the early Christian resurrection faith is irreconcilable with the Greek concept of the immortality of the soul? Does not the New Testament, and above all the Gospel of John, teach that we already have eternal life? Is it really true that death in the New Testament is always conceived as ‘the last enemy’ in a way that is diametrically opposed to Greek thought, which sees in death a friend? Does not Paul write: ‘O death, where is thy sting?’ We shall see at the end that there is at least an analogy, but first we must stress the fundamental differences between the two points of view...

The whole of early Christian thought is based in *Heilgeschichte*, and everything that is said about death and eternal life stands or falls with a belief in a real occurrence in real events which took place in time. This is the radical distinction from Greek thought...

Socrates and Jesus

Nothing shows more clearly than the contrast between the death of Socrates and that of Jesus (a contrast which was often cited, though for other purposes, by early opponents of Christianity) that the biblical view of death from the first is focused in salvation-history and so departs completely from the Greek conception...

AART – PLATO & or PRISONED BODY

In Plato’s impressive description of the death of Socrates, in the *Phaedo*, occurs perhaps the highest and most sublime doctrine ever presented on the immortality of the soul. What gives his argument its unexcelled value is his scientific reserve, his disclaimer of any proof having mathematical validity. We know the arguments he offers for the immortality of the soul. Our body is only an outer garment which, as

long as we live, prevents our soul from moving freely and from living in conformity to its proper eternal essence. It imposes upon the soul a law which is not appropriate to it. The soul, confined within the body, belongs to the eternal world. As long as we live, our soul finds itself in a prison, that is, in a body essentially alien to it. Death, in fact, is the great liberator. It looses the chains, since it leads the soul out of the prison of the body and back to its eternal home. Since body and soul are radically different from one another and belong to different worlds, the destruction of the body cannot mean the destruction of the soul, any more than a musical composition can be destroyed when the instrument is destroyed. Although the proofs of the immortality of the soul do not have for Socrates himself the same value as the proofs of a mathematical theorem, they nevertheless attain within their own sphere the highest possible degree of validity, and make immortality so probable that it amounts to a 'fair chance' for man. And when the great Socrates traced the arguments for immortality in his address to his disciples on the day of his death, he did not merely teach this doctrine: at that moment he lived his doctrine.

He showed how we serve the freedom of the soul, even in this present life, when we occupy ourselves with the eternal truths of philosophy. For through philosophy we penetrate into that eternal world of ideas to which the soul belongs, and we free the soul from the prison of the body. Death does no more than complete this liberation. Plato shows us how Socrates goes to his death in complete peace and composure. The death of Socrates is a beautiful death. Nothing is seen here of death's terror. Socrates cannot fear death, since indeed it sets us free from the body. Whoever fears death proves that he loves the world of the body, that he is thoroughly entangled in the world of sense.

Death is the soul's great friend. So he teaches; and so, in wonderful harmony with his teaching, he dies – this man who embodied the Greek world in its noblest form.

And now let us hear how Jesus dies. In Gethsemane He knows that death stands before Him, just as Socrates expected death on his last day. The Synoptic Evangelists furnish us, by and large, with a unanimous report. Jesus begins 'to tremble and be distressed', writes Mark (14:33). 'My soul is troubled, even to death', He says to His disciples... Jesus is so thoroughly human that He shares the natural fear of death... (this conclusion... is supported by the strong Greek expressions for 'tremble and shrink', [and not] by giving explanations which do not fit the situation, in which Jesus already knows that He must suffer for the sins of His people [Last Supper]. In Luke 12:50 it is completely impossible to explain away the 'distress' in the face of death, and also in view of the fact that Jesus is abandoned by God on the Cross [Mark 15:34], it is not possible to explain the Gethsemane scene except through this distress at the prospect of being abandoned by God, an abandonment which will be the work

of Death, God's great enemy.) Jesus is afraid, though not as a coward would be of the men who will kill Him, still less of the pain and grief which precede death. He is afraid in the face of death itself. Death for Him is not something divine: it is something dreadful. Jesus does not want to be alone in this moment. He knows, of course, that the Father stands by to help Him. He looks to Him in this decisive moment as He has done throughout his life. He turns to Him with all His human fear of this great enemy, death.

He is afraid of death. It is useless to try to explain away Jesus' fear as reported by the Evangelists. The opponents of Christianity who already in the first centuries made the contrast between the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus saw more clearly here than the exponents of Christianity. He was really afraid. Here is nothing of the composure of Socrates, who met death peacefully as a friend. To be sure, Jesus already knows the task which has been given Him: to suffer death; and He has already spoken the words: 'I have a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how distressed (or afraid) I am until it is accomplished' (Luke 19:50). Now, when God's enemy stands before Him, He cries to God, whose omnipotence He knows: 'All things are possible with thee; let this cup pass from me' (Mark 14:36). And when He concludes, 'Yet not as I will, but as thou wilt', this does not mean that at the last He, like Socrates, regards death as the friend, the liberator. No, He means only this: If this greatest of all terrors, death, must befall Me according to Thy will, then I submit to this horror. Jesus knows that in itself, because death is the enemy of God, to die means to be utterly forsaken. Therefore He cries to God; in face of this enemy of God He does not want to be alone. He wants to remain as closely tied to God as He has been throughout His whole earthly life. For whoever is in the hands of death is no longer in the hands of God, but in the hands of God's enemy. At this moment, Jesus seeks the assistance, not only of God, but even of His disciples. Again and again He interrupts His prayer and goes to His most intimate disciples, who are trying to fight off sleep in order to be awake when the men come to arrest their Master. They try; but they do not succeed, and Jesus must wake them again and again. Why does He want them to keep awake? He does not want to be alone.

When the terrible enemy, death, approaches, He does not want to be forsaken even by the disciples whose human weakness He knows. 'Could you not watch one hour?' (Mark 14:37).

AART – GETHSEMANE

Can there be a greater contrast than that between Socrates and Jesus? Like

Jesus, Socrates has his disciples about him on the day of his death; but he discourses serenely with them on immortality. Jesus, a few hours before His death, trembles and begs His disciples not to leave Him alone. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who, more than any other New Testament author, emphasizes the full deity (1:10) but also the full humanity of Jesus, goes still farther than the reports of the three Synoptics in his description of Jesus' fear of death. In 5:7 he writes that Jesus 'with loud cries and tears offered up prayers and supplications to Him who was able to save Him' ... Thus, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus wept and cried in the face of death. There is Socrates, calmly and composedly speaking of the immortality of the soul; here Jesus, weeping and crying.

And then the death-scene itself. With sublime calm Socrates drinks the hemlock; but Jesus (thus says the Evangelist, Mark 15:34 – we dare not gloss it over) cries: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And with another inarticulate cry He dies (Mark 15:37). This is not 'death as a friend'. This is death in all its frightful horror. This is really 'the last enemy' of God. This is the name Paul gives it in 1 Corinthians 15:26, where the whole contrast between Greek thought and Christianity is disclosed... Using different words, the author of the Johannine Apocalypse also regards death as the last enemy, when he describes how at the end death will be cast into the lake of fire (20:14). Because it is God's enemy, it separates us from God, who is Life and the Creator of all life. Jesus, who is so closely tied to God, tied as no other man has even been, for precisely this reason must experience death much more terribly than any other man. To be in the hands of the great enemy of God means to be forsaken by God. In a way quite different from others, Jesus must suffer this abandonment, this separation from God, the only condition really to be feared. Therefore He cries to God: 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' He is now actually in the hands of God's great enemy.

We must be grateful to the Evangelists for having glossed over nothing at this point.

Later (as early as the beginning of the second century, and probably even earlier) there were people who took offence at this – people of Greek provenance. In early Christian history we call them Gnostics.

I have put the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus side by side. For nothing shows better the radical difference between the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. Because Jesus underwent death in all its horror, not only in His body, but also in His soul ('My God, why hast thou forsaken me'), and as He is regarded by the first Christians as the Mediator of salvation, **He must indeed be the very one who in His death conquers death itself. He cannot obtain this victory by simply living on as an immortal soul, thus fundamentally not dying.** He can conquer death only by actually dying, by betaking

Himself to the sphere of death, the destroyer of life, to the sphere of ‘nothingness’, of abandonment by God. When one wishes to overcome someone else, one must enter his territory. Whoever wants to conquer death must die; he must really cease to live – not simply live on as an immortal soul, but die in body and soul, lose life itself, the most precious good which God has given us. For this reason the Evangelists, who none the less intended to present Jesus as the Son of God, have not tried to soften the terribleness of His thoroughly human death.

Furthermore, if life is to issue out of so genuine a death as this a new divine act of creation is necessary. And this act of creation calls back to life not just a part of the man but the whole man – all that God had created and death had annihilated. For Socrates and Plato no new act of creation is necessary. For the body is indeed bad and should not live on. And that part which is to live on, the soul, does not die at all.

If we want to understand the Christian faith in the Resurrection, we must completely disregard the Greek thought that the material, the bodily, the corporeal is bad and must be destroyed, so that the death of the body would not be in any sense a destruction of the true life. For Christian (and Jewish) thinking the death of the body is also destruction of God-created life. No distinction is made: even the life of our body is true life; death is the destruction of all life created by God. Therefore it is death and not the body which must be conquered by the Resurrection.

Only he who apprehends with the first Christians the horror of death, who takes death seriously as death, can comprehend the Easter exultation of the primitive Christian community and understand that the whole thinking of the New Testament is governed by belief in the Resurrection. Belief in the immortality of the soul is not belief in a revolutionary event. Immortality, in fact, is only a negative assertion: the soul does not die, but simply lives on. Resurrection is a positive assertion: the whole man, who has really died, is recalled to life by a new act of creation by God. Something has happened – a miracle of creation! For something has also happened previously, something fearful: life formed by God has been destroyed.

AART - GRÜNEWALD'S DEATH OF CHRIST

Death in itself is not beautiful, not even the death of Jesus. Death before Easter is really the Death's head surrounded by the odour of decay. And the death of Jesus is as loathsome as the great painter Grünewald depicted it in the Middle Ages. But precisely for this reason the same painter understood how to paint, along with it, in an incomparable way, the great victory, the Resurrection of Christ: Christ in the new body, the Resurrection body. Whoever paints a pretty death can paint no resurrection.

Whoever has not grasped the horror of death cannot join Paul in the hymn of victory: ‘Death is swallowed up – in victory! O death, where is thy victory? O death,

where is thy sting?' (1 Corinthians 15:54f)....

Conclusion

The answer to the question, 'Immortality of the soul or resurrection of the dead in the New Testament', is unequivocal. The teaching of the great philosophers Socrates and Plato can in no way be brought into consonance with that of the New Testament.

Is the Soul of Man Immortal ?

by Robert L. Kramer *

* Robert L. Kramer has been a pastor for 45 years in the Evangelical Congregational Church having studied at Moravian College and the Evangelical Seminary, Reading, PA and Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, PA. He has written Sunday School lesson quarterlies for his denomination and articles for the church paper, *The United Evangelical*. Upon retirement from the pastorate he was urged by his District Superintendent to pursue means to preserve and share his teachings with the Christian community at large. To that end he began to write and mail a bi-monthly periodical, *Second Thoughts*, which he has done for 14 years. He has also served as the Bible teacher in camp meetings and prophecy conferences in Pennsylvania and Texas.

Theologians have long been teaching and many Christians have accepted with little question or challenge the theory that the soul of man is immortal; that there is something living within our mortal bodies called the soul which will never die; that the soul of man will never cease to exist.

It is not certain that St. Augustine, who lived almost 400 years after Christ, was the first to propose this theory, but he is often quoted as an authority who supported it. He stated clearly and without qualification, "It is absolutely clear... the soul is immortal."

The Components of a Man

To answer the question, “Is the soul of man immortal?” one must ask two other questions, “What is the soul?” and “What is man?”

Largely on the basis of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 it is generally believed that man is made of three components – body, soul and spirit. If this were the only Scriptural statement on the subject that might be a valid deduction.

Two components in Genesis 2:7

However, we are given an account of the creation of the first man by the Creator which clearly announces that Adam was made of only two components – a body and a spirit. “*God formed man of dust from the ground [the body] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [the spirit] and man became a living being [lit. a soul].*” Thus the soul is not a third part, but the finished product when the two components are brought together. The God given spirit within the God created body results in a living soul. Man does not possess a soul; man is a soul. As Paul later wrote to the Corinthian Church, “*The first man Adam became a soul*”(1 Cor. 15:45). The soul does not exist apart from the spirit and the body; it exists only when these two components are in union.

This dual make-up of man is again revealed in the Scriptures when Koheleth (the preacher in Ecclesiastes) informs us of what happens at death. “*The dust [body] returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it*”(Eccl. 12:7).

When we understand that man does not possess a soul, but rather he is a soul, then, to ask the question, “Is the soul of man immortal?” is really simply asking, “Is man immortal?” The Scriptures clearly affirm that he is not. He was not created immortal else there would have been no need for the tree of life in Eden. Further, God has decreed, “*The soul who sins will die*” (Ezek. 18:4) and He has judged that “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23).

Three Revelations About Immortality

#1 Only God is immortal

Paul clearly and decisively says of God that it is He “*who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light*” (1 Tim. 6:16). That should be all that is necessary to answer the question once and for all. “Is the soul of man immortal?” Obviously not!

How, then, dare Augustine or anyone else teach that it is immortal? Augustine nimbly dances around 1 Timothy 6:16 and drains it of any meaning by saying, “The

soul is said to be immortal, but not as God is, of whom it is said, “*That He alone hath immortality*’.” Augustine, as others, desperately and stubbornly holds to his theology though the Scriptures clearly deny it. One is either immortal or not. On the basis of 1 Timothy 6:16 we must conclude that the soul of man is not immortal. That the soul of man is not immortal is further affirmed by the stated decree of God that “*the soul who sins will die*” (Ezek. 18:4).

AART – EDEN’S SWORD (Below)

#2. *Immortality was originally available*

It was God’s original intent that man could become immortal as is evident by the tree of life planted in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22). Had Adam eaten of that tree he would have lived forever. After Adam and Eve sinned they were removed from the garden and the tree of life was guarded so as to be no longer available to sinful humanity.

The consistent teaching of the Bible is that, because of sin man continues to be mortal, destined to die (Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:4 & Rom. 6:23).

#3. *Jesus made immortality available again*

The good news is that Jesus “*has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*” (2 Tim 1:10). While we do not possess immortality we can now seek and attain it. The gospel is that “*God will render... eternal life to those who seek for glory and honor and immortality*” (Rom. 2:5-7). We will become immortal by faith in God’s Son, Jesus. Those who believe in Him “*shall not perish but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16).

Let us not, however, be hasty and jump to a wrong conclusion about the timing of our becoming immortal. It does not occur at conversion (the new birth) as is generally thought and taught. Were that the case no Christian would ever die physically. The Scriptures are very clear in that we become immortal upon the return of Christ when all believers are resurrected or raptured. At that time “*we shall all be changed*” in a moment at the last trumpet. “*And [then] this mortal must put on immortality*” (1 Cor. 15:51-53). It will happen when we shall see Jesus returning (1 John 3:2). His coming will be neither sudden as the blink of an eye nor secretive, for every eye will see Him coming. Jesus had foretold His disciples that while they will receive many rewards in the present age they must await the age to come to receive eternal life (Mark 10:30).

AART – RESURRECTION (Above)

Does It Matter?

Does it matter whether we understand that the soul of man is not innately immortal and that Christian believers do not become immortal until the resurrection and the rapture? All truth is interrelated. One doctrine impacts on other doctrines. A proper understanding of immortality impacts on other doctrinal issues.

It impacts the doctrine of eternal security

One of the arguments used to support the theory of eternal security is the assumption that when one is converted he then possesses eternal life and that, by definition, cannot be interrupted or ended. However, as we have affirmed on the basis of 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 and Mark 10:30 the Christian believer does not become immortal and experience eternal life until Jesus returns. Until then, as long as we are in the flesh, we are mortal and can die spiritually as well as physically.

AART – HOUSE IN THE WOODS (Below)

Many are confused and misled by the fact that John (and only John) in several texts says that we have eternal life now in the present tense. John believes that Jesus is the embodiment of eternal life so that when one receives Jesus by faith he receives eternal life. He equates having Jesus to having eternal life. We possess eternal life now as a promised inheritance which we do not yet experience. I owned the house I am now living in a number of years before I retired and moved into it. I had a deed proving that I owned it, but had not yet moved into and experienced life in this home until retirement. As Christians we have a deed to eternal life, a promised inheritance, into which we have not yet moved. Revelation 22:14 says, “*Those who wash their robes may have the **right** to the tree of life,*” but they do not yet eat of it. We possess eternal life as an inheritance and a hope (Tit. 1:2; 3:7). Jesus holds it in escrow for us.

It impacts our understanding of the nature of death and our future existence

Man has always lived in a body and will continue to live in a body eternally. He was originally created as a divinely given spirit indwelling a divinely molded body. We dare not succumb to the temptation to think of life in heaven and in the new heaven and earth as being a vaporous, ghost-like, unreal existence. We are not now

and never shall be bodiless spirits. Life in heaven and in the new heaven and earth where we will spend eternity will not be so much different in form and nature from life as we know it presently. It will be better in all respects than life is here and now. It will be life as we now experience it – but with everything and everyone in a state of perfection.

At death the physical body will be laid aside and returned to the earth in burial while the spirit immediately returns to God who gave it (Eccl. 3:21; 12:7; 2 Cor. 5:1-4).

When Christ returns He will bring with Him the spirits of those believers who have died in order for them to receive a resurrected body suitable for resumption of life. It will be “*not the body which was buried*” but a God given body that will be imperishable, powerful, glorified, spiritual and immortal (1 Cor. 15:37-38, 52-54). Christians still living on the earth at that time will be instantaneously changed and possess the same kind of body.

The new body is described as being conformed to Christ’s glorified body in Philippians 3:21. In His glorified body He ate food and had drinks that were common to mankind; He appeared to and departed from people and places seemingly instantly; He touched and intermingled with others who had no glorified bodies and He ascended and descended between heaven and earth.

AART - BODILESS SPIRITS

It is probable that after the final judgment we shall occupy the new heaven and earth in that same perfected and glorified body. Life for the children of God will not ever be a monotonous, eerie, ghost-like existence, but a joyful, varied, exciting, satisfying and wonderful beyond our imagination experience as immortal souls composed of God-given spirits in God-given bodies.

AART – FIRES OF HELL (Below)

It impacts on our understanding of the nature and purpose of hell

I used to believe and teach what is still generally believed that sinners will be tormented for all eternity in Hell. On the basis of what the Scriptures actually say on that subject I no longer believe that. In order for sinners to be consciously in torment forever would mean and require that they also become immortal and never cease to

exist. Nowhere do the Scriptures affirm that to be the case.

Rather than being tormented forever in Hell, the Scriptures profusely and clearly state that they will be destroyed and experience a second death. (Matt. 10:28; Luke 13:3-5; John 3:16; Rom. 9:22; Phil. 3:19; 2 Pet. 3:7; Acts 3:23; 2 Tim. 1:10). John the Baptist said that the wicked are like chaff which will be “*burned up*” (Matt. 3:12).

Four additional texts firmly verify that the wicked will be destroyed in Hell:

Hebrews 10:27 says that a fire will *consume* them, that is, burn them up so as to be no more.

Revelation 20: 14-15 reports that at the final judgment Hell is described as the second *death* not as endless torment.

Luke 12:5 & Matthew 10:28 speak of Jesus forewarning the disciples to fear God because He has the authority and power “*to cast one into Hell where He is able to destroy both soul and body [the whole person]*”.

1 Timothy 6:16 & 1 Corinthians 15:50-57 affirm that only God is immortal and mankind in their natural state are mortal. While those who believe in Christ will inherit immortality the wicked will not and, therefore, cannot exist forever. Instead of being tormented forever they are ultimately destroyed.

Conclusion

The question “Is the soul of man immortal?” is really asking, “Is man immortal?” The Scriptures clearly affirm that he is not. He was not created immortal. It was, however, God’s original intent that man could become immortal as is evident by the tree of life planted in the garden of Eden. Had Adam eaten of that tree he would have lived forever. After Adam and Eve sinned they were removed from the garden and the tree of life was guarded so as to be no longer available to sinful humanity. Because of sin man continues to be mortal, destined to die. Christian believers do not become immortal until the resurrection and the rapture. As Christians we have a deed to eternal life, a promised inheritance, into which we have not yet moved. Revelation says, “*Those who wash their robes may have the right to the tree of life,*” but they do not yet eat of it. We possess eternal life as an inheritance and a hope. Jesus holds it securely for we who believe the Gospel of our salvation.

Between Death and Resurrection

by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes *

* Philip Edgcumbe Hughes was an Anglican clergyman and visiting professor at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia) This article was extracted from his final book, *The True Image – the origin and destiny of man in Christ* published in 1989 just prior to his death. We have included here portions taken from pages 393-401, from the chapters titled “Between Death and Resurrection” and “The Immortality of the Soul.” They are reprinted with permission from Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (Grand Rapids, MI). We highly recommend this controversial book

Pending the arrival of the last day, we continue to live in expectation – and to die in expectation. As persons are inexorably carried away by death and generation succeeds generation, it is only natural to ask what happens to the Christian in the interval between death and resurrection. What do we know about what is commonly called the intermediate state? As we seek the answer to this question it must be admitted that the New Testament does not provide much information on the subject; nonetheless, enough is said to enable us to form some positive conceptions. To begin with, death is frequently described as a sleep. When, for example, Jesus told the disciples, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen sleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep,” he explained that he meant, “Lazarus is dead” (John 11:11-14; cf. Matt. 27:52; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor. 15:6, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13-15; 2 Pet.3:4). The biblical custom of likening death to a sleep was not intended as a euphemistic disguising of the grim reality of man’s mortal finitude. The similitude appropriately served to teach that those who die in the Lord are at rest (as St. John was instructed to write: “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord henceforth. “Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors,’” Rev.14:13), and even more the truth that as sleeping is followed by waking so the Christian believer has the certain knowledge that, though overtaken by death, he will awaken at the resurrection to fullness of life in the presence and likeness of his Redeemer...

...The biblical authors, however, envisage heaven and hell as the final destinations of the redeemed and the unregenerate, and the time between death and the general resurrection as a time of waiting (a view with which the Reformers were in accord). The question is whether the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus conveys, or was intended to convey, teaching about the intermediate state at all. Its

main lesson regarding the future is, surely, that it is this present life for which each person is accountable, that at death the irrevocable separation is made, and that hereafter we enter either into rest and security or into anguish and loss (Luke 16::19ff)...

AART – TENT DWELLING (Below)

And in 2 Corinthians 5:1-9 St. Paul likens our present bodily existence to an earthly tent-dwelling which is dismantled at death, and contrasts it with the eternal heavenly building, that of the glorious resurrection body, which God has prepared for those who are in Christ. Here, indeed, he discloses a further preference beyond that mentioned in Philippians 1:23, namely, to be still alive at the time of Christ's return, and thus to avoid the experience of an intermediate state of existence. "We groan," he wrote, "and long to put on over [the present earthly dwelling] our dwelling from heaven" (like putting on a topcoat over a suit); and the purpose of this longing was "so that we may not be found naked," that is, divested of our body, for such divestment is disruptive of the integrity of man's true nature, which is bodily as well as spiritual. The Apostle would have preferred not to undergo this experience of "nakedness" which extends from death to resurrection. This demonstrates conclusively that Pythagorean or gnostic notions of the soul needing to be liberated from the body were completely alien to his thought. The sighing while in this present tent-dwelling, he explained, was "not that we would be unclothed," that is, be rid of bodily existence, "but that we would be clothed over," or superinvested, that is, with the glorified body God has prepared for us, "so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life," that is, by the transformation of the present earthly body into the glorious heavenly body, without passing through death and the intermediate state...

...man as originally created was both potentially immortal and potentially mortal. In close association with this is his having been created potentially sinless, but also potentially sinful. The possibility of his sinning involved the possibility of his dying, just as the possibility of his not sinning involved the possibility of his not dying. As we have remarked earlier, this does not mean that man was originally created in a state of neutrality between righteousness and sinfulness and between living and dying; for, on the contrary, his creation in the divine image, which is the bond of his personal fellowship with his Maker, placed his existence quite positively within the sphere of godliness and life. His loving and grateful concurrence with the will of God, who is the source of his life and blessedness, would have ensured the continuation of his existence in unclouded blessing as he conformed himself to that

image in which he is constituted. It was by his rebellion against his Creator that he passed from a positive to a negative relationship and brought the curse upon himself. His death, which is the sum of that curse, is also the evidence that man is not inherently immortal.

To contend that only the human soul is innately immortal is to maintain a position which is nowhere approved in the teaching of Scripture, for in the biblical purview human nature is always seen as integrally compounded of both the spiritual and the bodily. If this were not so, the whole doctrine of the incarnation and of the death and resurrection of the Son would be despoiled of meaning and reality. Man is essentially a corporeal-spiritual entity. God's warning at the beginning, regarding the forbidden tree, "In the day that you eat of it you shall die," was addressed to man as a corporeal-spiritual creature – should he eat of it, it was as such that he would die. There is no suggestion that a part of him was undying and therefore that his dying would be in part only.

The immortality, accordingly, of which the Christian is assured is not inherent in himself or in his soul but is bestowed by God and is the immortality of the whole person in the fulness of his humanity, bodily as well as spiritual. This immortality, unearned by us, has been gained for us by the incarnate Son who, by partaking of our human nature in its fulness, both bodily and spiritual, and by dying our death, nullified the power of the devil and removed from us the fear and the sting of death (Heb. 2:14f.; 1 Cor. 15:55f.). Our new life in Christ, which includes our ultimate resurrection to life and immortality, is owed entirely to God and his grace. *It is God who alone has immortality* and thus who alone may properly be described as immortal (1 Tim. 6:15-17; Rom. 1:23). And it is for us to confess, as did the Apostle, that by virtue of God's purpose and grace "*our Savior Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*" (2 Tim. 1:9f.). The immortality which was potentially ours at creation and was forfeited in the fall is now really ours in Christ, in whom we are created anew and brought to our true destiny.

Individual and Cosmic Eschatology *

* This article by the former editor is extracted from a previous issue of **Present Truth** (Vol. 3 #4).

The development in the church of a concept of a private, or individual, eschatology has eroded the absolute importance which the New Testament gives to the return of Jesus. To simply state that at death the believer departs to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23) or that the spirit returns to God, there to be preserved (Eccl. 12:7), is one thing, but to build from these undetailed references to the intermediate state a whole scheme of individual eschatology is another thing altogether. It is often claimed that at death the believer enters his reward quite apart from the second coming of Jesus Christ. Since the believer is supposed to receive all that is decisively important before and quite apart from the coming of Christ and the resurrection, the events of the last day are relegated to an insignificant appendix.

Some, being aware of this problem, have tried to strike a balance between individual eschatology (at death) and cosmic eschatology (at the coming of Jesus). The history of the Reformed church has demonstrated that individual eschatology tends to eat up cosmic eschatology. The ordinary man in the pew thinks far more about his *going* than Christ's *coming*. Thanatology, the "ology" of death, has taken the place of eschatology.

In the interest of upholding the focus of New Testament eschatology, we shall make the following observations on this problem:

1. The overwhelming focus of the New Testament is on Christ's coming. There are over three hundred distinct references to Christ's return, and this, this alone, is called the "blessed hope." Titus 2:13. The emphasis is overwhelmingly placed on Christ's *coming* rather than our *going*. Christ's coming for us is therefore an act of grace since it implies that we have no ability to go to Him:

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ...” 1 Peter 1:13.

2. The return of Christ at the eschaton is appealed to again and again as a great motive for ethical action among the redeemed community, e.g.:

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry...” Col. 3:4, 5.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God...” 2 Peter 3:10, 12.

“And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” 1 John 2:28.

3. Although it has become popular (and alas, sentimentally popular) to speak of the day of the believer's death as the day of his reward, is it Scriptural? A. J. Gordon has well said:

“Let us not, through a false humility, reject the doctrine of rewards, which Scripture so strongly emphasizes. But when and where? are the all-important questions. Constantly do we hear it said of one deceased, "He has gone to his reward". But, from the testimony of the Word, tell us where the believer is directed to look for his recompense at death? He is taught to aspire to a crown. But we are not to infer, because it is said, "Be thou faithful unto death", – that is up to the point of suffering martyrdom for Me, – "and I will give thee a crown of life", that our dying day is our crowning day, and that St. Sepulchre has been especially commissioned to preside at our coronation. To those who share Christ's travail and sorrow in the present life, for the rescuing of souls, a coronet of joy is promised. And when? "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thess. 2:19) To those who have chosen the portion of suffering with Christ in this world, as a little flock, it is written: "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:4). To the steadfast soldier, who has fought the good fight, and finished his course, and kept the faith, the assurance is: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, *but unto all them also that love His appearing*" (2 Tim. 4:8). Of that other crown – the fourth – the time of the bestowal is not mentioned: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved *he shall receive the crown of life*, which the Lord promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12, R.V.). But since it is the "corona vitae", it is evident that it will be given at Christ's advent, when forever "death is swallowed up in victory," and not at our decease, when for the time life is swallowed up in defeat...

“Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just”, said our Lord, speaking concerning the good deeds done to the poor. But, in the light of other Scriptures, we may say that there is no promise that has so general an application. If death be the payment of the debt of nature, the first resurrection, at our Lord's appearing, will be the full repayment of the debt of grace. For this event will give us back all that we have lost: our friends in Christ, looking and speaking as they were wont; our inheritance in an earth renewed and glorified; and the temple of our body, no longer a house divided against itself through the conflict of sin, but raised up and re-dedicated with surpassing glory. Christ's redemption is not a compromise with Death, but a reimbursement for all of which he has robbed us, – a full refunding, exacted by the lawsuit of the atonement, of our defrauded inheritance.” – A. J. Gordon, *Ecce Venit* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1890), pp.30-43.

AART = THE WHOLE MAN

4. If we are to think in Biblical categories, we must look at man *wholistically*. God created a whole man. It was the whole man that sinned, and it is the whole man who comes under the judgment of death. On this point Dr. Helmut Thielicke expresses the opinion of much modern scholarship which has returned to more Hebraic anthropology:

“It follows that I dare not regard my death, even under the aspect of biological mask, as something that no longer strikes the real me, since I am immortal, but moves on bypassing my soul. No, all of me goes down into death. Nothing gives me the right to reject the totality of man, which the Scriptures proclaim in connection with the disaster of death, and suddenly split him into body and soul, into a perishable and an imperishable I-segment. But as a Christian I go down into this death with the complete confidence that I cannot remain therein, since I am one whom God has called by name and therefore I shall be called anew on God's day. I am under the protection of the Resurrected One. I am not immortal, but I await my own resurrection...

AART = EMPTY HANDS

“At this point the reformers' biblical understanding of justification reaches, as it were, its high point. Just as I stand with empty hands before God and remain standing, just as I can only beseech God nevertheless to accept me, in just this fashion do I move into my death with empty hands and without any death-proof substance in my soul, but only with my gaze focused on God's hand and with the petition on my lips, ‘Hand that will last, hold thou me fast!’” – Helmut Thielicke, *Death and Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 198, 199.

Christ died to redeem the whole man. Redemption is not consummated until "the resurrection of the dead." Says Lutheran scholar Dr. Paul Althaus:

“The hope of the early church centered on the resurrection on the Last Day. It is this which first calls the dead into eternal life (1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3:20f.). This resurrection happens to the man and not only to the body. Paul speaks of the resurrection not of ‘the body’ but of ‘the dead.’ This understanding of the resurrection implicitly understands death as also affecting the total man...

“Thus the original biblical concepts have been replaced by ideas from Hellenistic gnostic dualism. The New Testament idea of the resurrection which affects the total man has had to give way to the immortality of the soul. The Last Day also loses its significance, for souls have received all that is decisively important long before this. Eschatological tension is no longer strongly directed to the day of Jesus' coming. The difference between this and the hope of the New Testament is very great.” – Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 413, 414.

Says respected Biblical scholar William Barclay:

“The word for resurrection, *anastasis*, occurs about forty times in the New Testament. It is used eight times of the resurrection of Jesus. When it is used of men it appears simply as the resurrection fourteen times; eleven times it is accompanied by *nekron* or *ton nekron*, which means the resurrection of the dead; twice it appears as the resurrection *ek nekron* or *ek ton nekron*, which means the resurrection from the dead or from among the dead. On five occasions it has descriptive phrases attached to it: the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14); the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment (John 5:29); the resurrection of the just and of the unjust (Acts 24:15); the first resurrection (Revelation 20:5, 6). Typical occurrences of the words are resurrection alone, Matthew 22:23, 28, 30; Mark 12:18, 23; Luke 20:27, 33; John 11:24, 25; Acts 17:18; 23:8; 2 Timothy 2:18; resurrection of the dead, Matthew 22:31; Acts 17:22; 23:6; 24:21; 26:23; 1 Corinthians 15:12,13, 21, 42; resurrection from the dead, Luke 20:35; Acts 4:2. Scripture does not speak either of the resurrection of the body or of the resurrection of the flesh.”– William Barclay, *The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed* (London & Glasgow: Collins Press, 1967), p. 334.

AART - TYNDALE

As William Tyndale, English Reformer and father of the English Bible, pointed out, St. Paul did not comfort the bereaved with an ethereal doctrine of spirit existence, but he led them to fasten their hope on the coming of Christ and the resurrection (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Finally, we cite *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, edited by Alan Richardson, D. D. (art. F. J. Taylor, "Immortality"):

“The Bible writers, holding fast to the conviction that the created order owes its existence to the wisdom and love of God and is therefore essentially good, could not conceive of life after death as a disembodied existence (‘we shall not be found naked’, 2 Cor. 5:3), but as a renewal under new conditions of the intimate unity of body and soul which was human life as they knew it. Hence death (qv) was thought of as the death of the whole man, and such phrases as ‘freedom from death,’ ‘imperishability’ or ‘immortality’ could only properly be used to describe what is meant by the phrase the eternal or living God (v LIFE, LIVING), ‘who only hath immortality’ (1 Tim. 6:16). Man does not possess in himself this quality of deathlessness but must, if he is to overcome the destructive power of death, receive it as the gift of God, ‘who raised Christ from the dead,’ and put death aside like a covering garment (1 Cor. 15:53-4). It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that this possibility for man (2 Tim. 1:10) has been brought to light and the hope confirmed that the corruption (Rom. 11:7) which is a universal feature of human life shall be effectively overcome. (V also HELL, RESURRECTION.)” – pp. 111,112.

AART = JOSEPH'S BONES

5. There is one more reason why the New Testament focuses on a single cosmic day of redemption. The believer is only a part of the body of Christ, which along with all creation must be released from the bondage of suffering and decay. As long as one member of the body suffers, all must suffer. (Even the great Head of the church is afflicted in all the affliction of His people [Isa. 63:9].) When this great fact is grasped, it will exorcise the selfishness of hoping merely for our individual day of redemption. Redemption cannot be consummated for me until it is consummated for all my brethren. I cannot get to the desired inheritance before them, and my brethren cannot go over into the "promised land" unless they carry the bones of Joseph with them.

In Romans 8 Paul shows that the elect all groan together that all might come to that great final redemption together (Rom. 8:18-23). This spirit of corporate oneness and concern pervades the Old Testament as well. Daniel the prophet prayed for the restoration of Israel from captivity. What would an individual release have meant to him unless all his people were released? Jesus also taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. St. Paul tells the Thessalonians that those who are alive at the time of Christ's coming will not have a head start over those who have died ("...shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep" – 1 Thess. 4:15). Neither shall those who die in the Lord and rest from their labors (Rev. 14:13) have a head start over those who live on. Says the writer to the Hebrews, "...only in company with us should they [who have died] reach their perfection." Heb. 11:40, N.E.B.

This brings us to the matter of "the intermediate state." Really, what does the Bible say beyond that those who have died in the Lord are "with Christ," that their spirit – their individual character, or identity – has returned to God to be preserved, that they "rest from their labours" and "sleep in Jesus"? Rev. 14:13; 1 Thess. 4:14. One thing is clear. They are not redeemed as an empirical reality until Jesus comes.

It is interesting to compare and contrast the views of Calvin and Luther at this point. Calvin defended the doctrine of the innate immortality of the soul, using without apology the classical arguments of Greek philosophy. Yet he approached the subject of the intermediate state with commendable caution. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* he said:

"Meanwhile, since Scripture everywhere bids us wait in expectation for Christ's coming, and defers until then the crown of glory, let us be content with the limits divinely set for us: namely, that the souls of the pious, having ended the toil of their warfare, enter into blessed rest, where in glad expectation they await the enjoyment of promised glory, and so all things are held in suspense until Christ the Redeemer appear." – (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), Bk. 3, chap. 25, sec. 6.

To Calvin the blessedness of this intermediate state was only of a precursory nature. There is still waiting in expectation for the crown to be attained. Many who

have followed on from Calvin have not been willing to hold these departed souls in such "agonized" suspense, so they have proposed that they enter their reward immediately. This illustrates what we mean when we say that individual eschatology eats up cosmic eschatology.

Luther's viewpoint was quite different. He rejected the medieval church's concept of the soul being inherently immortal, calling these ideas "monstrous opinions" out of the "Roman dunghill of decretals." – Martin Luther, *Assertion of All the Articles Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull*, Nov. 2g, 1520. Like righteousness, Luther viewed immortality as something which stood outside of man. This did not mean that he concluded that a dead man ceases to exist. He whom God wishes to speak to, either in love or in anger, cannot cease to exist. The immortality does not reside in the nature of man but in Christ and in His word of promise

As for the popular notion that the souls of the righteous have the full enjoyment of heaven prior to the resurrection, Luther whimsically remarked, "It would take a foolish soul to desire its body when it was already in heaven!" – *D. Martin Luthers Werke, ed. Tischreden* (Weimar, 1912-1921), p.5534, cited by Althaus, op. cit, p.417. He said further:

“Now, if one should say that Abraham's soul lives with God but his body is dead, this distinction is rubbish. I will attack it. One must say, The whole Abraham, the whole man, shall live. The other way you tear off a part of Abraham and say, ‘It lives’.” – *Table Talk*, cited by Althaus, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

As Althaus points out, "Luther generally understands the condition between death and the resurrection as a deep, dreamless sleep without consciousness and feeling." – Althaus, *op. cit.*, p. 414. Said Luther:

“For just as a man who falls asleep and sleeps soundly until morning does not know what has happened to him when he wakes up, so we shall suddenly rise on the Last Day; and we shall know neither what death has been like or how we have come through it.” – *Ibid.*

“We are to sleep until he comes and knocks on the grave and says, ‘Dr. Martin, get up.’ Then I will arise in a moment and will be eternally happy with him.” – *Ibid.*, p. 415.

Yet Luther could still speak of the departed being with the Lord as fully redeemed men. This is because he saw God as above and outside of our time. When a man dies, he passes out of time and arrives at the last day. In this sense there is no time between death and the resurrection. Yet all will reach the last day together.

With his rejection of man's innate immortality and his emphasis on justification by an outside righteousness and death and resurrection of the total man, Luther, more than any other Reformer, brought the eschaton into sharper and more urgent focus.

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘no’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good

“These, then, are the things you should teach.” Titus 2:11-15 NIV.

AART - OTHER AUTHORS

Additional Testimony

Martin Luther called the medieval church's concept of the soul being inherently immortal "montrous opinions" out of the "Roman dunghill of decretals." – *Assertion of All the Articles Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull*, Nov. 29, 1520.

"**John Calvin** (*Commentary ad I Timothy 6:16*) points out that the soul depends on God for its existence and continuance, so that 'properly speaking, it does not have an immortal nature'." – G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The image of God*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids), p. 249.

"**The Belgic Confession** [Art. 19] says that Christ *gave* immortality to His human nature through His resurrection." – *Ibid.* p. 244.

The Dutch Reformed scholar "**Abraham Kuyper** noted the contrast between Scripture and [the] deistic emphasis on immortality... (1870)." "The concept of dependence in human existence (i.e., man's creatureliness) cannot be combined with the concept of the immortality of the soul." "Kuyper... called the expression 'immortality of the soul' one which could not exist for the Bible, and pointed out that no creed of the Calvinist churches used the term: 'what the rationalist calls immortality is for the Christian eternal life'." – *Ibid.* pp. 244, 248, 249.

French Roman Catholic Dominican **Y. B. Trèmel** in a 1957 periodical wrote, "The New Testament obviously does not conceive of man's life after death philosophically or in terms of the natural immortality of the soul. The sacred writers do not think of the life to come as the term of a natural process. On the contrary, for them it is always the result of salvation and redemption; it depends on the will of God and on the victory of Christ." – "Man Between Death and Resurrection," *Theology Digest*, Autumn 1957, p. 151 taken from *Lumiere et Vie*. (1955), pp. 33-37; cited in LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, (1965), Review and Herald, Wash. DC; vol. 2, p. 921.

Quaker professor **Dr. David Elton Trueblood** said: "The very idea of enduring torment, in which there is the absence not only of the hope of reformation but even of the intention of reformation, is inconsistent with the conception of God as One whose nature is that of love which never ends." – *The Philosophy of Religion*, (Harper and Row), p. 295; cited in *Ibid.* p. 923.

Liberal Harvard professor **Dr. Paul Tillich** expounds: "[Man] came from nothing, and he returns to nothing. He is under the domination of death and is driven by the anxiety of having to die. This, in fact, is the first answer to the question about the relation of sin and death. In conformity with biblical religion, it asserts that man is naturally mortal. Immortality as a natural quality of man is not a Christian doctrine." – *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 66; cited in *Ibid.* p. 924.

Methodist professor **Edmund Perry** puts it this way: "The Biblical writers do not hold the

Greek view that man is a union of a perishable mortal body and an immortal soul which survives the body's death. Biblical writers view man as a created organic unity whose death is the death of the whole man. The body cannot be severed from that unity without destroying the whole man." *Confessing the Gospel Mark Preached*, p. 121; cited in *Ibid.* p. 927.

Dr. Rudolph Bultmann, German Lutheran professor at Marburg, writes: The investigation of Paul's use of *soma* has already shown that he does not dualistically set body and soul in opposition to each other. Just as Paul does not know the Greek-Hellenistic conception of the immortality of the soul (released from the body), neither does he use *psyche* to designate the seat or the power of the mental life which animates man's matter, as it had become the custom to do among the Greeks." – *Theology of the New Testament*, (Scribner's), vol. 1, pp. 203, 204; cited in *Ibid.* p. 924.

Lutheran scholar, **Dr. Paul Althaus** wrote, "the Christian faith knows nothing of an immortality of the soul." Berkouwer *Op. Cit.* p. 250.

G. C. Berkouwer in 1962 wrote "There can be no idea that death affects merely the body, as a part of man; the soul is also affected by death, so that after man dies there remains only one eschatological perspective: awakening from death. That is a perspective which has nothing to do with the 'natural' immortality or indestructibility of the soul, but comes exclusively from God's future creative act in Jesus Christ." – *Ibid.*, p. 251.

Lutheran author, **T. A. Kantonen** says, "Since Neoplatonism was the prevailing spiritual philosophy during the formative period of Christian theology, it is not surprising that many of the Fathers identified the Christian doctrine of eternal life with Platonic immortality. Through the centuries this unscriptural belief continued to permeate Christian thinking and to weld itself with popular animism into such an apparently self-evident and formidable 'truth' that it seemed to be a veritable cornerstone of the Christian faith." – *Life after Death* (Philadelphia, fortress Press, 1962) pp. 14-15.

German, Jesuit scholar **Hans Wolf** denies the natural immortality of man in his book *The Anthropology of the Old Testament*.

F. F. Bruce writes: "Paul evidently could not contemplate immortality apart from resurrection; for him a body of some kind was essential to personality. Our traditional thinking about the 'never-dying soul', which owes so much to our Graeco-Roman heritage, makes it difficult for us to appreciate Paul's point of view." – "Paul on Immortality," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 24 (1971), p. 457ff.

Praise the Lord

“Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint;
O Lord, heal me; for my bones are in agony.
My soul is in anguish. O Lord, how long?
Turn, O Lord, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.
No one remembers you when he is dead.
Who praises you from the grave?”

“To you, O Lord, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:
What gain is there in my destruction,
in my going down into the pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?
Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me;
O Lord, be my help.”

“I call to you, O Lord, every day;
I spread out my hands to you.
Do you show your wonders to the dead?
Do those who are dead rise up and praise you?
Is your love declared in the grave,
your faithfulness in Destruction?
Are your wonders known in the place of darkness,
or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?
But I cry to you for help, O Lord;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.”

“It is not the dead who praise the Lord,
those who go down to silence;

**it is we who extol the Lord,
both now and forevermore.
Praise the Lord.”**

Psalm 6:2-5; 30:8-10; 88:9-13; 115:17-18 NIV