

The
Conditionalist Faith
of Our Fathers

VOLUME I



The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers

*The Conflict of the Ages Over
the Nature and Destiny of Man*

by

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VOLUME I

The Biblical Norm and the Origin, De-
velopment, and Penetration of Innate
Immortality (900 B.C. to A.D. 500)

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**Moses Was the Inspired Chronicler of the Creation of
Man, His Sinless State, His Fall, and His Restoration to
Immortality Through a Divine Redeemer.**

PREPARED UNDER assignment from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and approved by a representative group of more than sixty recognized scholars—theologians, Bible teachers, editors, historians, scientists, physicians, and librarians.

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and copy editing, and to my former secretary, Mrs. Eunice Soper, for endless typing and stenciling of the manuscript in the process of development.

Lasting obligation is here registered for the munificent support of one of the chief friends of this enterprise—a professional man who wishes to remain anonymous, but without whose gracious help many features could not have been included that have enhanced the attractiveness and effectiveness of these volumes and made their strategic placement possible in key places around the globe.

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It is but fair to add that scores of individuals in Europe, Australia, North, South, and Inter-America served as lookouts, ever on the alert for elusive items, especially spotting contemporary Conditionalist statements of men who have broken with the traditional positions, whose important utterances are included in volume 2.

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As nothing gives greater satisfaction to an author than to acknowledge publicly his indebtedness to those who have made his research-writing possible, that pleasure is now mine.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgment is here made to the many helpers of my pen without whose skills and aid this volume could never have been produced. I take particular pleasure in recording indebtedness to numerous national, State, university, seminary, college, public, and private libraries and archives in both the Old World and the New.

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Dedication

*To All Who Seek the True Story of the Conflict
of the Centuries Over the Nature and Destiny of
Man as Revealed in the Unfolding Testimony of
History, and Attested by the Unerring Witness
of the Word, THESE VOLUMES ARE HUMBLY
DEDICATED*

From Author to Reader

A LITTLE more than a century ago the celebrated historian and theologian Dr. Philip Schaff predicted in his *History of the Apostolic Church* that eschatology would constitute the final area destined to engage the interest and concern of Christian scholars. The issues, he held, would revolve around the involvements of eschatology. It was a profound observation, for all the faults and errors of traditionalism, in the area of our concern, have sprung from false concepts of eschatology.

It is significant that the major periods of church history have been called upon to unfold and place in clear light particular aspects of Bible truth to counteract a corresponding error. For example, it was necessary for the Nicene age to assert ^{1.} the doctrine of the eternal deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit—the doctrine of the Trinity—to counter the deviations of Arianism. In the Augustinian period the call was ^{2.} to vindicate the doctrine of human sinfulness and divine grace—as against the vagaries of Pelagianism.

The doctrinal task of the Protestant Reformation was to ^{3.} recover the inward appropriation of salvation, especially the truth of justification by faith, or salvation as effected by Jesus Christ—in opposition to the Roman concept of legal righteousness. In Wesley's day the summons was to the doctrine of Free ^{4.} Grace in contrast to rigid predestinarianism that was then prevalent. This process has gone on until the whole circle of Christian truth has been largely covered. And now in the nineteenth ^{5.} and twentieth centuries the doctrine of the last things, or eschatology—death, judgment, the Second Advent, resurrection, and immortality—is indeed having its vital turn. That is the area of our immediate concern and the justification for and burden of this work.

The time had clearly come for an examination in depth of the conflict of the ages over the nature and destiny of man. During the past century there has been a rising crescendo of discussion over this issue. And a growing demand has come from men of many faiths in various lands for someone to go to the bottom of this vital question that has agitated the minds of countless numbers of earnest Christians across the centuries—as well as intriguing the philosophers of pagan times prior to the Christian Era. These current appeals have urged that the salient facts be sought out and spread before the reader for candid examination and evaluation, holding that such a definitive study is long past due.

This present work has been undertaken in response to that call. The search for the full facts has involved the combing of the greatest libraries of the Old World and the New, and the cooperation of librarians and other scholars in every quarter of the globe. The initial result of this combined endeavor has been the assemblage of an unprecedented Immortality Source Collection that has brought together the testimony of the key witnesses across the years. The portrayal here presented is based on these original sources. And the tangible results of this comprehensive search are here submitted to the scholars of all faiths.

The role of the church historian in bringing forth a specialized history in a designated field—such as concerns the conflict of the centuries over the nature and destiny of man—is not an easy one. And his responsibility is great. The task calls for thoroughness of investigation, tenacity, candor, competence, and accuracy of conclusions. The historian must not be swayed by bias or prejudgment. He must get back of outward appearances to inner causes. He must uncover the underlying principles and basic issues. Only thus can a true delineation be produced.

This we have sought to do in these two volumes. We have ferreted out the original writings and secured reliable translations, for such constitute the imperatives for this portrayal. We have used the most competent authorities for checking, and

for getting the biographical facts and historical setting for the presentation. We have traversed the centuries in order to compass the whole story. Any evasion or suppression of the facts of history in this great dialogue of the ages could only lead to biased concepts and faulty conclusions. That could not be tolerated. Fidelity to fact has been our guiding principle.

We have been compelled to penetrate to the very heart of church history, and its inevitable clashes with the encroachments of philosophy, which have exerted such a powerful and often fateful influence upon the course of mankind. The subtleties of human philosophy have all too often had a sinister effect upon man's concept of divine truth. Thus the theological views of the early church were altered by Greek Platonism, and those of medieval schoolmen changed by the logic and dialectics of Aristotle.

Relatively few have been able to emancipate themselves from the dominant philosophy and public opinion of their own age. But always there have been some, and these have often been intellectual giants. So the dictates of philosophy and the mandates of Bible doctrine have moved forward warily, side by side, alternately attracting and repelling one another. But in the end the transcendence of divine revelation will prevail, and the wisdom of the world will be lost in the wisdom of God.

The pursuit of historical truth led back to the source of truth in divine revelation, in contrast to the vagaries of human reason. It led through the agelong struggle between conflicting principles, and will terminate in the ultimate recovery and re-establishment of the original truth. That constitutes the battle line of the centuries over the nature and destiny of man, as unfolded in these pages. The tracement has been a fascinating and rewarding pursuit, bringing assurance and satisfaction to the seeker for truth.

Always, in every major epoch when truth is revived and comes to grips with error, there have arisen devout scholarly men who have championed unpopular truth and protested and unmasked error. This is the undeviating testimony of history.

God has had His witnesses and His warriors in every age, as He has today. And this principle embraces the conflict of the ages over the nature and destiny of man.

Many significant treatises of the past, having served their immediate purpose, were allowed to go out of circulation and sight. To recover them from the archives of the Old World and the New has been a tremendous task. Our first obligation was to retrieve these well-nigh lost witnesses that provide the vital testimony of their times, for they were the voices that represented their generation. And these men of the past prepared the way for the current widespread revolt against the traditional positions so long dominant. Those entrenched concepts sprang from Protestant retentions of papal errors, which in turn had been derived from the Platonic philosophy that penetrated the Christian Church in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. That is the lineage.

But all the while, protesting against such grave digressions, there has ever been this line of stalwart dissentients—actually champions of positive Bible truth. This venerable procession, emerging from the past, constitutes the trek of the centuries in man's noble march toward the ultimate restoration of the Conditionalist faith. These stalwarts transmitted the protest of the centuries against entrenched error, along with the recovery of apostolic truth on the nature and destiny of man.

The search for the basic issues disclosed three conflicting views, or schools of thought, regarding the destiny of the wicked—(1) that of Eternal Torment for the wicked, (2) Ultimate Restoration for all men, and (3) Ultimate Utter Extinction of the incorrigibly evil. The ceaseless conflict between these views has occupied many of the finest minds of the centuries, because it is a question of both transcendent importance and deep personal concern.

Must it be either the eternal misery of the many or the enforced blessedness of all? Or does the true position lie between the two? Is there a position that harmonizes the justice, righteousness, and mercy of God? Is there a view that vindicates

both the character and the government of God, and meets the demands of reason? Is there a position that reconciles seemingly conflicting statements in Holy Writ? Yes, say the witnesses, there is. And this is borne out by the findings of history. This view has been held, then lost, and finally regained by the church during the passage of the centuries—and without impairing confidence in either God or man.

This is the story in a nutshell, as unfolded by the evidence. The fateful spark that set off the battle of the ages over the veracity of God as to the nature and destiny of man was ignited within the very gates of Eden. It was the sinister work of a malign tempter. Its success brought about the fall of man, changed his entire nature, and jeopardized his destiny. But this catastrophe resulted, in turn, in the provision of redemption through a divine Saviour-Substitute, who was pledged to restore man's lost righteousness and life, and ultimately to destroy the tempter and end the cruel experiment of sin and banish death forever.

The conflict between truth and error, personalized in Christ and Satan and involving all mankind, loyal and disloyal, has raged across the centuries. But it will end with the declared triumph of Christ, the utter overthrow of Satan, sin, and sinners, and the restoration of Paradise in the earth made new, where will dwell the immortalized saints forever. For this may be cited the pledge of God in His Word. It eventuates in a clean universe forever.

* * * * *

The first two of the four sections of volume 1 are devoted to the full Bible evidence—first that of the Old Testament, and then the fuller witness of the New. These have been covered in depth, as the Scriptures constitute the only norm by which to judge the historical departures that have developed. The remaining parts (III and IV) are historical. Part III portrays the telltale origin of the postulate of Immortal-Soulism, and its development into a devastating system under Greek Platonism, then its penetration into the Jewish faith with dire results. Part

IV compasses the first five centuries of the Christian Era, depicting Platonism's subsequent infiltration into the Christian Church, though it did not appear therein until about A.D. 187.

Then is traced the resultant split of the Christian faith, developing into three conflicting views, or schools, on man's nature and destiny. This permanent cleavage was consummated during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, thus resulting in an irreconcilable theological trilemma. That epitomizes the scope of volume 1. The conflict characterizing the remaining centuries of the Christian Era has been among these three schools. And that, in a word, is the general scope of volume 2. But it all leads to a climax in the triumph of truth.

Washington, D.C.
November 16, 1965.

LEROY EDWIN FROM

PROLOGUE

Conditionalism Versus Immortal- Soulism

I. Purpose and Scope of This Vital Quest

Life, death, and destiny! Here and hereafter! These are quandaries that have intrigued the mind of man ever since the dawn of history. Where did we actually come from? Why are we here? Where are we destined to go at the close of life? And what, especially, of this mystery of the hereafter? What actually *is* death—is it a beginning, or an end? These are some of the perennial and insistent questions asked by millions of lips that clamor for a satisfying and authoritative answer.

1. FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS THAT DEMAND AN ANSWER. —Just what is the nature of man—is he mortal, or immortal? And what of death—is it a cessation of life, or an entrance upon a fuller existence? Above all, what is our condition during death—is it one of consciousness, or unconsciousness? And where are we during that mysterious intervening state? What about man's fate after death—is he suddenly transported to eternal bliss, or consigned to endless agony—or perchance to bleak obliteration—if his life has been evil? Is he actually to be summoned back from the dark unknown? If so, for what purpose and what end? Can we know? Does anyone know? Is there any source of trustworthy and authoritative information?

What are the answers to these haunting questions that have plagued the curious and the thoughtful across the years?

To find the answers to these and related questions is the purpose of this quest, and the design of *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*. To what sources, then, shall we turn?

2. SOLE SOURCE OF RELIABLE INFORMATION.—Philosophy can only proffer educated guesses. Logic can only reason in plausible circles. History cannot supply the answer—it only records the gropings of man after the answers that he craves. Paganism has weird and wildly clashing notions. Even the Christian creeds are in conflict. And the eerie utterances of Spiritualism, both ancient and modern, are filled with contradictions that neutralize one another. It is a bewildering cacophony of discordant voices. Where, then, and to whom can we turn?

There is only one dependable and inerrant source of enlightenment—God, who made man. We must turn from man to God. And there is only one reliable revelation, the inspired Word of God. To Holy Writ, then, we shall turn to seek the answers to these questions. But first, permit this personal word.

3. AUTHOR'S PERSONAL DECLARATION OF FAITH.—Before proceeding further, it is only fair and proper that at this point in the opening chapter the author make a declaration of his religious faith, so there will be no misunderstanding as to the basis of his presentation. He is a conservative, evangelical Protestant. He believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, is the sole and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and provides the answer to our questions.

He believes in the historicity and reliability of the Genesis recital of the origin of man on earth. The author is a creationist, not a believer in the postulates of evolution. And he is a literalist as regards the record in the opening chapters of the first book in the Sacred Canon. He accepts the episodes narrated in Genesis 1 to 3 as actualities, not as legendary myths. This will give point to the positions hereafter set forth, and avoid misunderstandings or ambiguity as to the basis of his statements.

4. SCOPE OF THE GROUND COVERED.—First, the Biblical evidence will be studied in depth, the Old Testament evidence, and then the New. Next, the historical origin and development and worldwide spread of Immortal-Soulism will be examined, and its penetrations into the Jewish and Christian faiths presented with documentation. And then the conflict of the centuries between the three schools of the theological trilemma that developed will be set forth with covering data—the conflict over the nature and destiny of man as it advanced across the Christian Era. And finally will come the revival of Conditionalism in increasing volume and tempo during the past three hundred years. Thus the sweep of the ages will be brought into view, and the over-all picture set before us. That is the conspectus of the *Conditionalist Faith* volumes.

But before proceeding we should first define the key terms, "Conditionalism" and "Conditionalist," appearing in the title and thereafter throughout this work.

5. BASIC DEFINITION OF CONDITIONALISM.—*Conditionalism* is the Christian doctrine that immortality, or everlasting life, is offered to man only upon God's terms and conditions. *Immortal-Soulism*, on the other hand, holds that man was created with a soul, which has a separate existence from the body, and that it is innately and indefeasibly immortal. Conditionalists believe that the man who does not accept God's conditions for life will be ultimately deprived of life, totally destroyed. Immortal-Soulists, on the other hand, believe that the man who disobeys God and persists in his rebellion will be cast into an eternally burning hell-fire, where he will be tormented forever, since his soul cannot die.

Conditionalists believe that at the death that meets all mankind, good and bad alike, man rests in the grave until the resurrection, when all men will be raised, some to life everlasting and some to receive their punishment. During the interim they believe man is unconscious of the passing of time and knows nothing of events occurring on earth. Immortal-Soulists believe that at death man goes to some place of

conscious existence. Some believe that all men go at once to their eternal reward or punishment, the good to Heaven and the bad to Hell.

Others believe that some at least go to Purgatory, because they are not yet good enough for Heaven or bad enough for Hell. Here they are allowed to suffer for a time to purge them of their remaining sins, and then they are admitted to Heaven. Still others believe that there is no Hell, and all men will eventually reach the abode of bliss.

II. Consistency and Obvious Soundness of Conditionalism

The key to the problem of life, death, and human destiny, as held by the conflicting schools of Conditionalism and Immortal-Soulism, is obviously to be found in the Biblical story of man's creation and fall, and his redemption provided in Christ. Adam and Eve went tragically astray. Yielding to the tempter's enticing promise, they stifled the voice of God. The allurements of superior wisdom, sensuous enjoyment, and the glamour of supposedly natural, inherent immortality (to be enjoyed in disobedience) led them swiftly and inexorably into the way of death.

As a result all seemed hopelessly lost. But unexpectedly, hope was proffered to distraught man. All might yet be recovered. Men might still find their way back to God and their lost estate, with Paradise and life regained through a Redeemer. Confession, faith, obedience, and resistance to temptation marked out the road back to the way of life. God would completely save contrite sinners who love, serve, and obey Him.

I. ADAM'S POTENTIAL FOR IMMORTALITY WAS CONDITIONAL.—Here is God's good news: Although man was not created unconditionally immortal, and is not today born immortal, yet he may become so—if he follows the provisions of God. According to the unfailing promise of the Almighty, he may require an immortality beyond the reach of death and time and destruction. That is the high privilege to be granted

to the righteous—a favor conferred on the penitent believer. But it is *always conditional*.

The righteous will live again, forever; but the impenitent will finally be destroyed—likewise forever. Life is thereby conditional. These are the final endings of the two ways of life and death. That is the essence of Conditionalism, or Conditional Immortality. And such is the picture that grows increasingly clear and luminous in the dawning light of the Genesis introduction to the Old Testament.

So long as Adam remained in the Garden he was allowed to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. But, as mentioned, his potential for immortality was *conditional*. When once he made a breach in God's protective and enabling conditions, he became subject to the death penalty. The primal pair was created "very good"—*with a view to immortality*. But they were not imperishable. They did not have an inherent, natural, and indefeasible immortality—that is, incapable of being annulled or made void.

It was indeed possible for Adam not to die. The possibility of immortality was within his reach. But he forfeited it. And holiness still comes by an act of free choice or decision, with death as the sequel to willful transgression. So immortality for Adam was clearly relative, or *conditional*, and the sin of disobedience made him mortal—subject to death and destined to die.

2. CONDITIONALISM HARMONIZES DIVINE GOODNESS WITH HUMAN FREEDOM.—Conditionalism provides a synthesis that coordinates the various doctrines of the gospel. The truth of Conditionalism is founded on positive Biblical declarations, not on negatives and inferences. Negations and inferences—
not to mention parables or figurative or symbolic expressions—
can never be a safe or satisfying foundation for any doctrine,
much less a system of fundamental doctrine. *The Creator gave man existence and offered him immortality.* Moral reasoning likewise favors the hypothesis of attainable or conditional immortality. And every moral being is subject to certain

conditions of existence. Thus Moses said: "I have set before thee this day *life* and good, and *death* and evil" (Deut. 30:15). Again, this law "is your *life*: and through this thing ye shall *prolong your days*" (Deut. 32:47). "But if thine heart turn away . . . ; ye shall surely *perish*, . . . ye shall *not prolong your days*" (Deut. 30:17, 18).¹

Thus it is that the doctrine of Conditionalism reconciles and harmonizes divine goodness with human freedom. Compulsory immortalization of the wicked would be unworthy of the goodness and power of God, and tragic to the human recipient. Conditionalism is a return to the primitive gospel—the gospel of Eden. And it is making marked gains in advocates, as attested by the evidence set forth in volume 2.

The tremendous truth of "life only through the redemptive work of Christ" throws a flood of light upon the whole scope and system of revealed truth. It makes, as it were, a new book of the Bible. The gospel promise in Eden becomes luminous. The types and shadows of the Old Testament, and its sanctuary system and services, take on a meaning not before observable. And the moral law, which in its negative and prohibitory form failed to "make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1), much less to give them spiritual life, takes on its higher spiritual meaning under the gospel. All is expressed in the one word "love"—love as the source and essence of spiritual recovery and *everlasting life*. That is the larger picture. "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).

That is the heart of the gospel, the essence of revelation, the hope of man.

3. CONDITIONALISM ATTESTED BIBLICALLY, LOGICALLY, HISTORICALLY.—This, then, is our statement of purpose: Evidence will be submitted to support the contention that Conditionalism is (1) sound *Biblically*, both in the English ren-

¹ Cf. Deut. 4:40; 5:33; 6:2, 24; Ps. 21:4; 94:23; Prov. 3:1, 2, 16; 9:11. "The fear of the Lord *prolongeth* days; but the years of the wicked shall be *shortened*" (Prov. 10:27).

dering and even more so in the original Hebrew and Greek phraseology. It is (2) sound according to the inexorable canons of logic. And it is (3) sound according to the unimpeachable testimony of history.

It was designed by God for man; lost through the historic deception visited on the race by Satan in Eden; and uniformly cherished by God's ancient chosen people until shortly before the time of Christ. And when Immortal-Soulism was adopted from Greek Platonism by the Alexandrian wing of the Jews, it was chiefly through Philo. But Conditionalism was maintained by Christ and the apostles, and sustained by the Apostolic Fathers and the earliest of the Ante-Nicene Fathers—and on with a continuing line for centuries, as we shall see.

On the contrary, Immortal-Soulism was not adopted in Christian thought until certain North African Platonic Church Father-philosophers espoused it after nearly two hundred years of the Christian Era had passed. But this segment split in the subsequent century into two antagonistic schools, divided over *Eternal Torment* and *Universal Restoration*.

Thus by A.D. 400 the Christian Church was divided into three distinct schools of eschatology—creating an astonishing theological trilemma that has persisted ever since. Though not widely held, Conditionalism persisted through the Middle Ages and underwent a distinct revival, beginning with the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. From then on, despite the preponderant Catholic and majority Protestant views, Conditionalism has gained steadily. And now, as never before, it is receiving attention and winning adherents among scholars of all faiths. That, in a word, is a thumbnail historical preview of the ground to be traversed. No position could be better sustained, as the facts to be surveyed will disclose.

III. Eternal Torment Involves Pagan "Dualism" Postulate

There is yet another angle to this question that must not be overlooked. The postulate of an eternal Paradise and an eternally coexistent Hell—introduced from Platonism into

the religious thinking of sections of Judaism and Christianity—presupposes the metaphysical Dualism of two eternal and incompatible principles (that always were and always will be), which notion sprang out of pagan ethnic religions, such as Persian Zoroastrianism. But such a concept is utterly foreign to Scripture, both Old Testament and New alike. Contingent evil may be explained by the positive exercise of liberty and will. But unless one accepts the dogma of an eternal Dualism, the presence of evil involves a beginning, and consequently and logically and inevitably calls for an end. Eternal sinning and eternal suffering are contrary to the testimony of Holy Writ.

To hold that the final result of the wrong exercise of human freedom means the perpetual revolt and eternal suffering of a given number of creatures, automatically involves the notion of the eternal duration of an evil principle and a state of unending rebellion against God and good—and thus an infinity of evil as eternally opposed to the infinity of good. But to hold such a theory is to inject an alien pagan Dualism into the true concept of the Supreme Being. According to Scripture there is only one Absolute, Infinite, Omnipotent One—God, the eternal I AM, “*Who only hath immortality*” (1 Tim. 6:16). And the day is verily coming, according to Holy Writ, when He will be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). Opposition will have ceased and passed forever.

The deducible conclusion from such an inspired postulate is that of the end, or ultimate extinction, of the devil and the principle of evil, and of all who persist in following him. When God is “all in all” sin and death will be no more, and there will be no place for any beings, celestial or human, who are without right moral relation to God. The concept of the Eternal Torment of the wicked involves a shocking calumny against both the justice and the very nature of God, as revolting upon mature thought as it is dangerous and un-Biblical. And the dogma of indefeasible immortality for man is to assign to the soul the impossibility of neither beginning nor end, such

as the Neoplatonic Christian philosopher, Origen of Alexandria, held, which is perilously akin to pantheism, the original source of this perverted concept.² ✓

As might be assumed, Old Testament eschatology is simple, logical, and majestic, without a single element detrimental to the loftiest concepts of Deity and the divine philosophy of history, and with nothing to revolt the moral senses—nothing of the weird extravagances replete in pagan speculation and myth. And the New Testament evidence only intensifies this noble view.

² See Historical Section, Part IV, pages 969-977.

PART I

Biblical Norm Set Forth in
Old Testament

*Earliest Comprehensive Evidence on
Life, Death, and Destiny*

Man Created in the Image of God

Gen 1 - Creation

We begin our Biblical survey with Genesis. It is the bedrock upon which all subsequent revelation rests, and is foundational to all that follows thereafter. We shall therefore search into the all-inclusive declarations of Genesis 1 to 3 with considerable detail, for this is the core, yes, the throbbing heart of all that follows in the conflict over the destiny of man.

I. Introductory Survey of Record of Creation

According to the uniform testimony of Sacred Scripture, the heaven and the earth with its inhabitants, were brought into being by fiat creation:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6). "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (v. 9).

The first chapter of Genesis describes the creation of living creatures after the earth and the vegetation had been set in order:

"God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. . . . And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, . . . and every



HARRY ANDERSON, ARTIST

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Man, the Crown of Creation, Placed Amid the Beauties and Perfection of Eden, Was Without Bent to Sin and Had the Potentiality of Endless Life and Happiness Without a Shadow.

thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image . . . ; male and female created he them" (vs. 20-27).

Chapter two recapitulates the story of creation with additional details:

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (v. 7). "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (v. 9). "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air" (v. 19).

In this recital three expressions call for special notice at the very beginning of our survey, "God created man in his own image," "man became a living soul," and "breath of life."

II. Creation in "Image of God" Not a Valid Argument

1. "IMAGE OF GOD" DOES NOT CONNOTE "IMMORTALITY" FOR MAN.—The contention is frequently put forth that man possesses natural, innate, and really indefeasible immortality because of the phrase appearing in Genesis 1:27—"God created man *in his own image*, in the *image of God* created he him." There are, in fact, five such declarations in the Inspired Chronicle:

"And God said, Let us make man *in our image, after our likeness*" (Gen. 1:26).

"And God created man *in his own image, in the image of God* created he him" (v. 27, twice).

"God created man, *in the likeness of God* made he him" (chap. 5:1).

"In the *image of God* made he man" (chap. 9:6).

These texts do not, of course, state in what respect God created man in His own image. That specification is left undefined. However, it is a recognized principle of sound exegesis that the certain must not be interpreted in terms of the uncertain. Nor should violence be done to the preponderant witness of Scripture or even to the logical demands of reason.

An inference might possibly be drawn here as to the im-

"IMAGE"

✓ Principles of exegesis

1.
2.
3.

mortality of man—if this one expression stood alone. But if Adam and all of his descendants are immortal by creation, and therefore by nature, then surely some hint to this effect should be found in this initial narrative, or at least somewhere within the entire range of Biblical writings, which are spread over some fifteen hundred years, and include prophets and apostles, and even embrace the witness of Jesus Christ Himself. But immortality, Scripture insists, is an attribute restricted to God alone. He “is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality” (1 Tim. 6:15, 16).

2. NO VALID REASON FOR SINGLING OUT IMMORTALITY.—

But creation in the divine “likeness,” or “image” (Gen. 1:26)—repeated in the record for emphasis—is no more an evidence of man’s Innate Immortality than of his eternal pre-existence, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, or any other strictly divine attribute. And none of these other attributes have been ascribed to man, even in his pristine sinlessness in Eden. That God made man for immortality is clear. Beyond that sound and safe position we are not justified in going.

There is no valid reason, then, why immortality alone should be singled out as the one unique characteristic intended by the phrase “image of God.” Genesis 1:26 and 5:1 also speak of man’s being created in the “likeness” of God. This likeness to God included a moral character not shared by the brute creation over which man was given dominion. But whatever the precise nature of that original “likeness,” it was marred by man’s disobedience, during which tragic experience his original purity and position were marred or lost.

Man in his sinful condition cannot claim the full benefit of this original endowment, whatever it may have included. But, we repeat, *the record nowhere states that this included immortality.* We must therefore conclude that creation in the divine “image,” or “likeness,” no more proves man’s immortality than it proves his eternal pre-existence, omniscience, omnipotence, or possession of any other exclusively divine attri-

1. moral char.

bute. God made man *for* immortality. That is beyond reasonable challenge. Let us test this out by the same canons of logic invoked. Let us visualize it by putting it in syllogistic form.

logic

3. FUNDAMENTAL FALLACY REVEALED BY PARALLEL SYLLOGISMS.—As to the fundamental fallacy involved in this foray into logic, in the contention noted, the argument may be fairly set forth, in syllogistic form, thus:

Major Premise: God is *immortal* (1 Tim. 1:17)

Minor Premise: Man was created in the *image of God* (Gen. 1:27)

CONCLUSION: *Therefore man is immortal.*

But such a plausible yet specious deduction, based on this actually misleading syllogism, is completely quashed by a paralleling syllogism that exposes the inherent fallacy of such unsound reasoning. Note it:

1. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent:

2. Man was made in the *image of God*:

3. *Therefore man is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.*

Obviously, the argument from logic breaks down under the impact of this logical parallelism, as well as the contravening testimony of Scripture. We consequently maintain that there is no sound logical basis, much less Biblical foundation, for asserting that in creating man "in his own image" God bestowed on him the one distinctive attribute of immortality alone, but not the other prerogatives of Deity—unless God were to so state in His Word. This He has not done. One cannot logically insist, then, on singling out *immortality*, when by common consent it is recognized that man does not possess the other inseparable characteristics restricted to Deity.

Personality, dominion over the animal creation, and free moral agency? Yes; for these are declared, but *not* natural immortality. (The technical arguments will be presented separately.) Man was driven out of the Garden, and cherubim and flaming sword were set up to prevent access to the indispensable tree of life—"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of

2. Personality
3. Dominion
4. Free moral agency

the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. 3:22). Thus the "image of God" argument collapses by default.

III. "Living Soul" Does Not Connote Immortality

Another expression concerning man's creation, that is likewise often invoked to sustain Immortal-Soulism, is the intriguing term "living soul." Here is the familiar text cited: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a *living soul*" (Gen. 2:7).

The fact that Scripture declares that man became a "living soul" is persistently cited by some as establishing man's possession of inherent immortality. But while man became a living soul, he did not thereby automatically become an immortal soul, or being. The same Hebrew term, "living soul," is applied to the lower animals. In fact, nephesh (soul) is four times applied to the lower animals before it is used of man—in Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30. And out of the first thirteen usages in Genesis, nephesh is nine times used of the lower animals.

Thus the expression "living soul," as applied to Adam, does not thereby prove that he was endowed with immortality when he was created. If it does, then the animals were likewise invested with immortality, for they were also called "living souls" (Gen. 1:20)—which all will admit unquestionably goes too far. The obvious difference between a "living soul" and a lifeless soul is, of course, that the one has life, whereas the other does not. The term "living soul," then, actually implies mortality, for the word "soul" is also applied to men who are dead.

I. LIVING SOUL NOT A SEPARATE ENTITY.—Further, God did not take a separately "living soul" and install it in a lifeless body—a tenant, as it were, a separate entity distinct from it. It was by the divine inbreathing of the "breath of life" into the

lifeless body that man became a living soul—a single entity, an inseparable unit, a unique individual. The heart began to beat, the blood to circulate, the brain to think, and all the processes of life sprang into action. In death the process is simply reversed—the life-giving breath is withdrawn, the heart ceases to beat, the circulation of the blood stops, the (mind) ceases to function, and all the vital processes end. The organism begins to disintegrate, and the body returns to the dust—the same lifeless condition whence it came. The individual is dead. mind

2. INNATE DEATHLESSNESS NOT PART OF ORIGINAL ENDOWMENT.—Inasmuch as God declared that after his transgression man was destined to return unto dust (Gen. 3:19), it is crystal clear that not only was he *not* immortal then but that up to that point immortality had not been assured him. Moreover, that he was not as yet immortal is likewise shown by his expulsion from the Garden—“lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever” (Gen. 3:22). The term “living soul” is therefore clearly not to be equated with *immortal soul*—an expression never once occurring in Scripture. This fact is unassailable. ✓

It must be obvious, then, that Genesis 2:7 does not countenance the assumption of innate deathlessness as an original endowment of man's nature, nor does the creation story as a whole. Adam was simply created a *candidate* for immortality, which was to be conferred upon him upon the fulfillment of conditions. Hundreds of outstanding Bible students of all faiths, spread over the centuries, attest that there is not a single passage in the Bible in which man, in his earthly life, is spoken of as immortal, either as a whole, or in any part of his being. (These are discussed in volume 2.)

But in addition to this negative aspect of omission, the inspired record of creation contains positive evidence of man's

¹ It is significant to note that *nephesh* is used, in contrast, of man as actually dead—and this in thirteen passages: “The dead,” five times (Lev. 19:28; 21:1; 22:4; Num. 5:2; 6:11); “dead body,” three times (Num. 9:6, 7, 10); and “body,” five times (Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6; 19:11, 13; Haggai 2:13)—a total of thirteen of such significant usages. ✓

candidacy only for immortality in the original threat of death in case of disobedience, and finally in the doom of death subsequently pronounced in Eden. Man was not created immortal, but only a candidate for immortality.

IV. "Breath of Life" Equated With "Spirit" and "Spirit of God"

The expression "breath of life,"² in Genesis 2:7—elsewhere called the "breath of the Lord" and "breath of the Almighty"—is frequently equated with "spirit," and "spirit of God." Thus in Job: "If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his SPIRIT [*rûach*] and his BREATH [*neshamah*]; all flesh shall perish [expire] together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:14, 15).

1. "BREATH"—"BREATH OF GOD"—"SPIRIT"—"SPIRIT OF GOD."—The "breath of life" is elsewhere called God's gift: "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens . . . ; he that spread forth the earth . . . ; he that giveth BREATH [*neshamah*] unto the people upon it, and SPIRIT [*rûach*] to them that walk therein" (Isa. 42:5). It is this "breath" that gives life to man: "The Spirit [*rûach*] of God hath made me, and the breath [*neshamah*] of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

Life is consequently dependent upon this "breath." "All the while my BREATH [*neshamah*] is in me, and the SPIRIT [*rûach*] of God is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3). But possession of the "breath of life" does not in itself confer immortality, for we read that at the Flood "all flesh died . . . , and every man: *all in whose nostrils was the BREATH of life* [Heb. *nishmath rûach chayyim*, "breath of the spirit of life"]" (Gen. 7:21, 22).

2. "BREATH OF LIFE," "SPIRIT OF LIFE"—SAME PRINCIPLE OF LIFE.—That the "breath of life" of Genesis 2:7 that God

² In the Hebrew there are two words for breath—*neshamah*, and more commonly *rûach*. In general, they are used interchangeably for "breath" and "spirit."

thus breathed into man's nostrils is identical with the "spirit" that God gave, is seen from the reversal of the creation process recorded in Ecclesiastes 12:7—"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the SPIRIT [*rûach*] return unto God who gave it."³

Breath and spirit obviously are one and the same principle of life. This fact is enforced by the striking principle of parallelism in Hebrew literature. Here verses comprising two clauses are constantly used, in which the second clause is the repetition of the thought of the first clause, only in different language. Thus: "All the while my BREATH [*neshamah*] is in me, and the SPIRIT [*rûach*] of God is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3).

And again, in describing death, Job says, "If he [God] gather unto himself his SPIRIT [*rûach*] and his BREATH [*neshamah*]; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:14, 15).

Similarly in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, the life that had vanished would be restored when God would "cause BREATH [spirit, *rûach*] to enter into you, and ye shall live" (Eze. 37:5). And He reiterates: "And I will . . . bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put BREATH [spirit, *rûach*] in you, and ye shall live" (v. 6). Then, repeating His promise that He would bring them out of their graves, He promises, "and shall put my SPIRIT [*rûach*] in you, and ye shall live" (v. 14).

3. "SPIRIT," OR "BREATH," NEVER IDENTIFIED WITH SOUL.—In conformity with this, the psalmist David at the prospect of death committed his spirit into the safekeeping of God—"Into thine hand I commit my SPIRIT [*rûach*]: thou hast redeemed me" (Ps. 31:5). And Jesus Himself used these very same words: "Father, into thy hands I commend my SPIRIT [Gr. *pneuma*]: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46). And it should be noted that while Scripture

³Thus God is called "the God of the SPIRITS [plural of Heb. *rûach*] of all flesh" (Num. 16:22; 27:16). Cf. Luke 23:46: "Father, into thy hands I commend my SPIRIT [Gr. *pneuma*]: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost [expired, or breathed His last]."

identifies, or equates, "breath of life" with "spirit," *spirit* is not once identified with *soul*. That is significant, and should not be forgotten.

4. POSSESSORS OF "BREATH OF LIFE" SUBJECT TO DEATH.— It is to be particularly observed that having the "breath of life" is never said to make its possessor deathless, or immortal. This is clearly seen from the following texts:

"And, behold, I [God], even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh [every kind of being], wherein is the BREATH [*rúach*] of life [*chayyim*, plural for all kinds and manifestations], from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die [cease to breathe, expire]" (Gen. 6:17).

"They [Noah and his family], and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the BREATH [*rúach*] of life" (Gen. 7:14, 15).

This "breath of life," given by God to *man* at his formation, returns to God at death (Eccl. 12:7). Of the Flood, the record is:

"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: ALL in whose nostrils was the BREATH [*neshamah*] of life [R.V., "breath of the spirit of life"], of all that was in the dry land, died [ceased to breathe]" (Gen. 7:21, 22)⁴

It therefore follows that man does not possess immortality because he possesses the breath, or spirit, of life—for it may be possessed by him for time only and not for eternity. It may be separated from man forever.

V. Clarifying Distinctions Between Soul and Spirit

The relationships, distinctions, and contrasts between "spirit" and "soul" can be seen from Genesis 2:7. The in-

⁴To these should be added, "And every living substance that I have made will I destroy ["blot out," margin] from off the face of the earth" (Gen. 7:4).

breathing of the "breath [or "spirit"] of life" into the first human body-organism, made or constituted it a "living soul." Prior thereto the soul, as regards Adam, had no existence. The "man" Adam was fully made and complete in bodily form *before* he began to live, for "God formed *man* of the dust of the ground" (v. 7). Nothing was wanting to make him a "living" man or being, or entity, or "living soul" but the "breath of life." When God breathed this into him, he then became a "living soul."

1. "SOUL" DEPENDENT UPON PRESENCE OF "SPIRIT."—As long as the "breath of life," or spirit, remains in man, the "soul" continues to be or live. But when the "spirit" departs, he is no longer a living soul. Hence, the existence of the soul, as produced by the presence of the spirit, must always depend upon the continuance of that presence. In other words, with the reception of the SPIRIT [*rûach*], the SOUL [*nephesh*] comes into being and remains in being. And when the spirit is withdrawn, man thereupon ceases to be a living, sentient being. Thus the psalmist says, "His [man's] BREATH [*rûach*, spirit] goeth forth, he returneth to his earth [Heb. '*adamah*, ground or soil]; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4).

2. SPIRIT AND SOUL HAVE SERIES OF CONTRASTS.—"Spirit" and "soul" are therefore distinct and distinguishable. They constitute, essentially, cause and effect—connected but separate and distinct, coordinated but contrasting. Thus the "spirit" produced "life" in man, making him a "living soul," capable of thinking, feeling, and acting—and with *moral responsibility*. The soul is the living person or being himself, not a separate, independent "something." And it must never be forgotten that spirit and soul are never confused in Scripture, nor are they used interchangeably.

At death the "soul" (the man himself) goes to *she'ól* (the grave, *gravedom*, or the state of death), while the spirit goes back to God, from whom it originally came. That is totally different. Further, the soul sins (Eze. 18:4, 20). But that is not

said of the spirit. In death the two are dissevered, and it requires a resurrection from death to another life to re-establish the dissevered connection.

3. "SPIRIT" RETURNS TO GOD WHO "GAVE IT."—Of the final disposition of the *rúach* (spirit, or breath), the Old Testament writers record:

"Thou takest away their BREATH [*rúach*], they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy SPIRIT [*rúach*], they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. 104:29, 30).

"His BREATH [*rúach*] goeth forth, he returneth to his earth [Heb. *'adamah*, ground or soil]" (Ps. 146:4).

"There is no man that hath power over the SPIRIT [*rúach*] to retain the SPIRIT [*rúach*]; neither hath he power in the day of death" (Eccl. 8:8).

After describing man in advanced age—with its characteristic deterioration, followed by death itself (Ecclesiastes 12)—such figures are employed as, "the silver cord [spinal cord] be loosed, or the golden bowl [head or skull] be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain [failure of the heart]" (vs. 6, 7). The sage of Ecclesiastes next says: "Then shall the dust [by metonymy, put for body, made of dust] return to the earth as it was: and the SPIRIT [*rúach*, not *nephesh*] shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7).

4. TO "SAVE A SOUL" IS TO SAVE A MAN.—The question also arises as to the meaning of "save a soul." It is simply to save what is the equivalent of a soul—the man himself. Man was made to have eternal life, but lost it by sin. He was to have continued on perpetually had Adam not sinned. Man dies the first death because Adam sinned. But he may be saved from, and avoid, the second death by redemption. Saving a soul, then, is saving a person from death; or, in other words, it is saving him unto life. That is the wonder of the gospel in operation.

5. BIBLICAL PORTRAYAL OF DEATH.—Of Abraham's death it is written: "Then Abraham gave up the ghost [yielded up his spirit], and died in a good old age . . . ; and was gathered to

his people [idiomatic euphemism for death and burial]. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah" (Gen. 25:8, 9).

Of Jacob's death and burial this is the record: "He [Jacob] . . . yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." "For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah" (Gen. 49:33; 50:13).

And of David's death, and Solomon's, it is written, "So David slept with his fathers [laid down to sleep], and was buried in the city of David" (1 Kings 2:10); "And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David" (1 Kings 11:43).

Prohibition, Probation, Temptation, and Fall

*Gen 2
Fall*

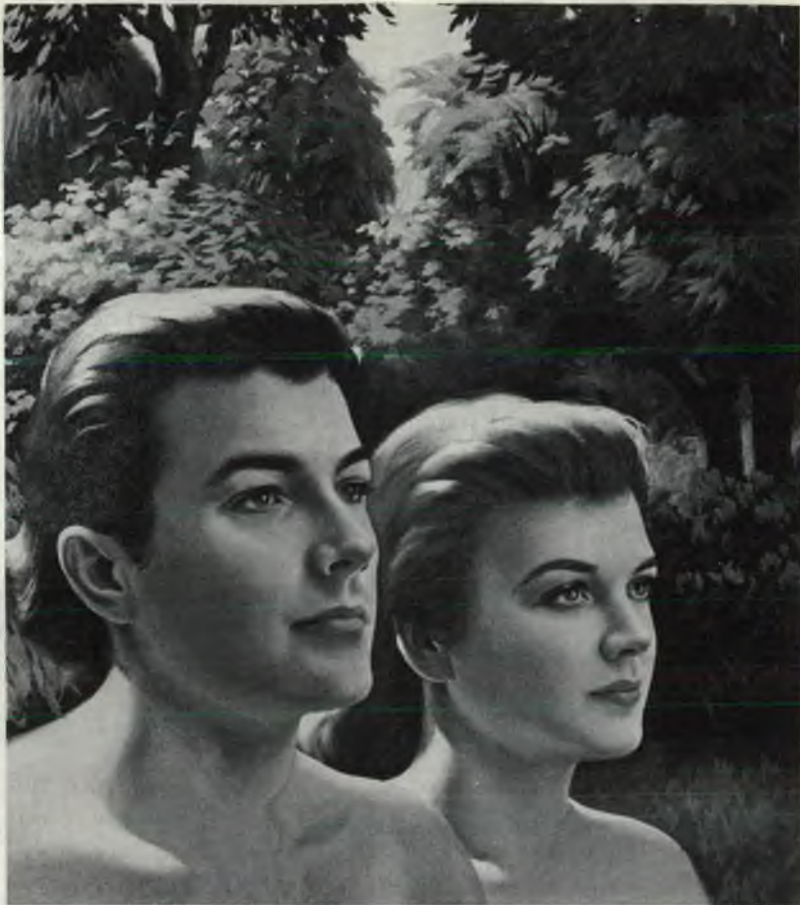
I. One Prohibition Placed Upon Man in Eden

God brought forth a perfect world and placed perfect creatures upon it. The record is: "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). After the vegetable and animal life were created, man, "the crown of creation," was brought into existence. He was a being worthy of his Creator, for he was made "in the image of God" (v. 27). And God created a companion for Adam—a helpmeet corresponding to him, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. They were innocent and perfect, and were free moral agents, capable of understanding righteousness, wisdom, justice, and moral obligation. But before they could be made eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. Here is the Bible story:

"The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:8, 9).

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (vs. 15-17).

Everything on earth was placed under man's control except one tree. The eating or even the touching of the fruit of that tree (Gen. 3:3) was the one prohibition placed upon



RUSSELL HARLAN, ARTIST

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Adam and Eve, as Free Moral Agents, Were Placed Under Test in Eden, Over Obedience to God's One Prohibition.

Adam and Eve. The sinless pair were thus placed in a perfect environment, subjected to a simple basic test, and duly warned of the consequence of disobedience. A subject of the divine government, man was placed under the law of obedience as an indispensable condition of continuing welfare and existence. If he transgressed here he incurred guilt, and disaster would follow.

Adam might have been created powerless to transgress—a mere automaton. But without freedom of choice, obedience would have been forced, not based voluntarily on sovereign

choice. There would then have been no essential development of character. Hence, perfect perpetual obedience was the condition of eternal happiness. This was the condition of perpetual access to the indispensable vigor imparted by the tree of life.

FIRST PARENTS PLACED ON PROBATION.—Our first parents, as dwellers in Eden, were thus placed on probation. Their holy estate, *and life itself*, could be retained only *on condition.* The issue was clearly drawn. There was the tree of life in the Garden and the unequivocal statement of God concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In effect God said, You may choose to obey or to disobey. Continued life in My domain is conditioned upon obedience. If you disobey, death will be the result. Thus the choices were clearly set forth, and the results—life or death.

II. Freedom of Will Is Moral Accountability

It is commonly recognized that God alone is infinite and absolute in liberty of will, purpose, and action. But the moral creatures of His earthly creation—that is, mankind—were also endowed by their Creator with freedom of will. They were free moral agents. And no loftier conception of creative power and purpose can be conceived. Man, the crown of creation, was brought into being with a view to exercising that will with freedom, though the liberty of the creature is necessarily but relative as compared with that of the Creator.

Therein lies the explanation of the origin of good and evil. The contingency or possibility of a fall is, of course, inherent in such a creative provision. And the essence of the Fall is, in reality, the abuse of that vested liberty. So *sin* is the consequence of this collision between the will of man and the will of God—the assertion of self over against God.

1. FREEDOM OF WILL IS ESSENCE OF BEING.—Adam was neither an automaton nor an undeveloped newborn babe, but

a mature man—a completely responsible being. He must make his own choices. Though created sinless, he had to develop a righteous and holy character. And character is developed through right and sovereign choices. There could be no virtue if there were no possibility of becoming vicious. And virtue must be attained for continued life and fellowship with God. The only course that man was not free to take was that of never choosing. In fact, refusal of a free moral agent to make choice is impossible. Sooner or later choice must be made between truth and error, obedience and transgression.

The fall of the creature, then, is a determinate choice or exercise of his own will in a direction contrary to God's will—the infinite and absolute will of God. It is the rebellion of a free moral agent. If this attitude persists, and no remedy is found, the result must eventually be the destruction of the rebellious sinner, for "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). This point is vital, and justifies reiteration: The natural and inevitable consequence of such a life-and-death collision between the two wills is that the creature's will must ultimately cease to be. He must "perish" (John 3:16). Otherwise the Creator's will would no longer be absolute, but limited and negated by the creature's persisting defiance.

But man as a creature was brought into being for the right and free exercise of his will. Liberty is therefore the very basis of his existence. Indeed, it constitutes the essence of his being. Therefore the removal of such liberty means the destruction of his very being and the termination of his existence as a moral entity. And it is, of course, the creature that will ultimately be obliterated in a fatal collision of the two wills. Any other outcome would be unthinkable—for the continuance of a moral creature without liberty, or with his freedom run amuck, would be the continuance of something without justifiable purpose. The creature would be no longer worthy either of God or of continuance.

2. ENDLESS DEFIANCE WOULD THWART GOD.—The endless existence of such defiance would be a contradiction of the

root concept of the omnipotence and wisdom of God. Therefore the logical consequence of the Fall will be the ultimate total extinction of the defiant creature formed to live in liberty. But he had now chosen to misuse that liberty. His essence of being will be taken away, and will revert to nothingness, as God becomes "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

It is absurd and unthinkable to maintain, as some do, that God, the almighty Creator, would start something He could not stop.

But that golden day when God is "all in all" has not yet come to pass. Defiant creatures still exist. And while the Fall occurred back in Eden, evil by choice still persists. Human and angelic beings, good and evil, still exist and flout and defy God—along with Satan himself, the personification of sin. While man still exercises his freedom, he does not have all of his original liberties and privileges. But he is still held inescapably accountable for his decisions. For these he must give answer, and accept responsibility at the judgment bar of God. That is the logic of the case, and the Biblical principle at stake.

3. ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION FOR INCORRIGIBLE DEFIANCE.

—The free creature that sets himself up in conflict with God's will, cannot conceivably continue to exist forever as a free creature. There is obviously a limit, because God's liberty and power are infinite, as well as His goodness and justice. God has restricted, or repressed, His own complete liberty for a time, and imposed upon Himself certain restraints so as to leave room for the sinful creature's liberty until the close of humanity's period of probation.

But if such creature-defiance were to be continued eternally, such rebellion would thwart God's absolute liberty, love, and justice, which must ultimately fill the universe and all existence for all eternity to come.

Ultimate and utter destruction of the incorrigibly defiant is therefore the logical and unavoidable consequence of the Fall. *Such is the verdict of logic.*



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Amid All the Glories of Eden, Eve Had Everything Needful for Complete Happiness and Continuing Life, but Became Fascinated by the Forbidden Fruit.

III. Temptation at Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

At the very beginning of life's pathway in Eden, temptation confronted the first pair. Here is the Bible account:

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:1-6).

Eve was evidently passing through "the midst of the garden" when a remarkable talking serpent in the fruit-laden branches of the forbidden tree attracted her attention. Her answer to the serpent's intriguing question shows that she clearly understood God's prohibition and the penalty for dis-

obedience. But the serpent flatly denied God's threat, "Ye shall not surely die," and continued seductively, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was doubtless suitable for food, for there was no poison in Paradise. It appealed to Eve's sense of beauty. And it commended itself to the intellect as a tree that, if true to its name, should surely impart wisdom—just as the tree of life imparted life. And this wisdom, according to the allurements of the "serpent," would lift man's insight to a parity with that of God.

Eve was thus assured that they would attain a more exalted sphere of existence, and enter into a broader area of knowledge—if only they would partake. The serpent was evidently ensconced in the tree, and retribution had not been visited upon it. And the serpent promised an unconditional immortality, whereas God's promise was conditional on obedience. Would they indeed progress in knowledge, and be gainers by violating the command of God? Would they actually become like God Himself?—and the attributes of God would, of course, include immortality, omniscience, et cetera, with all that such characteristics involve. That was the basic issue. That was the life-and-death question. Man's destiny was involved in the outcome.

Eve, alas, was led to believe the serpent's words, and thereby to disbelieve and deny the word of God. First, *touching* the fruit, she did not die. Then she ate of it without immediate death. Then she led Adam to accept and eat. That is the tragic record.

IV. Satan Himself the Undercover Tempter in Eden

It is difficult to conceive of Eve's holding converse with a groveling snake, as we know it today, or giving heed to it. But we can understand her fascination with a radiant creature, appearing like an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14)—and appar-

ently possessing supernatural knowledge, along with its disconcerting questions. Tradition has come to portray a slithering snake and a shining apple in connection with the Fall—the former based on a misconception; the latter a pure fabrication. Thus this tragic episode is made the butt of the jeers and jokes of the infidel and the target of the critic's attacks. But let us turn from all such trivia, as we reverently seek the truth.

The scene of this artful and crafty temptation in Eden was laid amid the glories of the significant trees of the Garden. And the undercover tempter was none other than Satan himself, working through the medium of an enchanting "serpent" (Heb. *nachash*)—the name implying fascination or enchantment¹—evidently on the order of a *šaraph*.² The enchanting serpent of Eden was clearly not the writhing snake of today, now slithering along on its belly. It was then a creature of glorious beauty, more "subtil" (Heb. *'aram*, wise) than any other creature in Eden, possessing powers and capacities no longer enjoyed.

So this most attractive and intelligent of all creatures, then doubtless having wings, like the *šaraph*, was the dazzling medium that attracted the attention of Eve and to which she paid such deference. But back of it was none other than the old "serpent" (2 Cor. 11:3), here operating under a guise. After its cruel achievement, Satan's tool was cursed by God and then made to glide and spiral along on its belly (Gen. 3:14), and has ever since been a loathsome, writhing reptile. That was one of the secondary results of the Fall.³

¹ *Nachash* may be translated enchant, fascinate, bewitch, or as having occult powers of knowledge, or divination. It was something glorious and scintillating. See Gen. 44:5, 15; Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10; 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6; 2 Chron. 33:6.

² The fiery serpents, or burning ones of Numbers 21:6, 9, were reminders of the glorious celestial beings of Isaiah 6:2, *nachash* being virtually synonymous with *šaraph*, indicating brilliance and fascination ([Bullinger]. *The Companion Bible*, on Num. 21:6, 9, notes; cf. Isa. 6:2, note. See also App. 19, pp. 24, 25).

³ The annals of antiquity reveal that in ancient times the serpent was always regarded with awe. As it had no eyelids—a transparent membrane taking the place of those movable veils—it was seemingly a creature with eyes always open. Accordingly it was considered the most vigilant and intelligent of all animals. In fact, the name dragon, a kind of serpent, means the one that sees, and was believed to see at night. Another recognized characteristic was that under an inoffensive appearance it often concealed a deadly venom.

The Greek heralds, for instance, were symbolized by two serpents facing each other, signifying wisdom on both sides. And back in Egypt the gods and kings were always represented as having the *uraeus*, or coiled serpent, upon the head. In Greece, Pallas Athena, goddess of wisdom, wore a necklace of entwined serpents, sometimes with one at her feet.

V. Lucifer's Rebellion in Heaven Transferred to Earth

I. PRIDE AND JEALOUSY FOMENTED REBELLION IN HEAVEN. —Here let us go back in time. Bible students widely recognize that Isaiah 14:12-18 and Ezekiel 28:12-18 are Inspiration's portrayals of the origin, nature, and destiny of Satan.⁴ These passages tell us how Lucifer, the exalted light bearer, degenerated through sin into one who came to be called the devil (literally, *slanderer*) and Satan (the *adversary*). Created to be one of the covering cherubs, the highest and wisest of the angelic beings, Lucifer became "lifted up" because of his beauty and wisdom (Eze. 28:17).

Jealousy of God gripped his heart, and he determined to exalt his throne above his fellows, and to be like the Most High (Isa. 14:13, 14). The Bible is explicit in teaching the personality of Satan and his part in effecting the fall of man. He himself is presented as a created being, likewise with power of choice, who took advantage of his liberty in order to bring about evil and to lead others into his own estrangement and rebellion.

Moved by jealousy and ambition, Lucifer fomented rebellion in heaven, a third of the angels joining his defection (Rev. 12:4; Jude 6). But he was defeated and cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:7-10; Luke 10:18), with the "angels that sinned" (2 Peter 2:4), who were cast into "pits of darkness" (A.S.V.). Satan was driven from his "first estate" and made the aerial regions and the earth the scene of his subsequent relentless warfare against God and man (Eph. 6:11, 12).

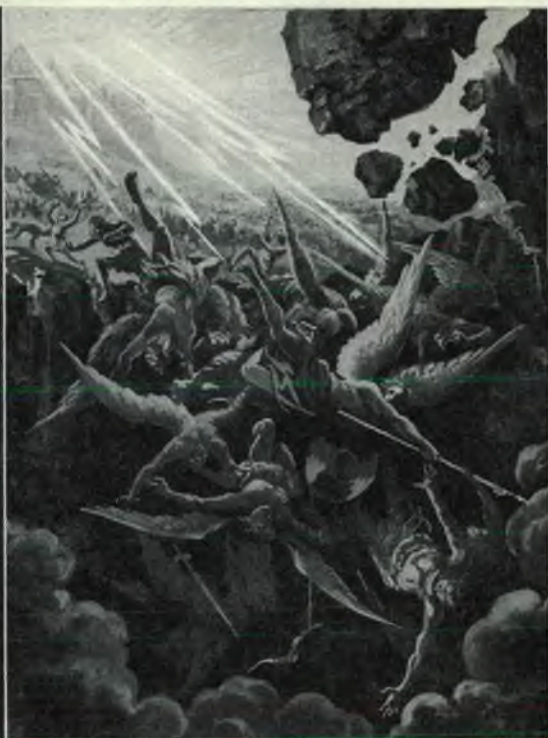
He became the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), and has assumed the princship or godship of this world (2 Cor. 4:4; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), with malign power to tempt mankind. His cohorts embrace the evil "principalities" and "powers" and spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). Lies, deception, force, cruelty, disease, suffering,

⁴ Church writers as early as Tertullian and Jerome so held. And this has also been a common understanding ever since the Middle Ages.



T. K. MARTIN, ARTIST

Lucifer, Radiant Head of the Hosts of Heaven, Through Sin became the Embodiment of All Evil, the Father of Lies, the Tempter and Subverter, the Great Deceiver.



AFTER GUSTAVE DORÉ

Satan and His Evil Minions Were Cast Out of Heaven, and Thenceforth Concentrated on Bringing Ruin to the Inhabitants of Earth Throughout the Centuries.

and *death* are his malign weapons. Here is the factual record in the Apocalypse:

“And there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and his angels fought against the dragon [Satan]; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his [fallen] angels were cast out with him” (Rev. 12:7-9).

So in the ultimate the great controversy is between Christ and Satan, and will continue on without respite until Christ gains an eternal, annihilating victory over Satan and his followers. That is the destined outcome.

2. EDEN BECOMES THE NEW BATTLEGROUND.—After the creation of man and his placement in Eden, Satan in his epochal

temptation of man used a captivating, winged serpent of dazzling beauty, speaking through it to deceive and beguile Eve through the subtlety of his arguments (Gen. 3:1). In this way Satan secured the downfall of Adam, and thus of the race. But the covenant-promise subsequently made to Adam assures the ultimate destruction of Satan through the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15).

Satan then began his long and relentless warfare against God and man, with resort to every foul means and evil device. Cast out of his first estate, the devil operates as head of a vast host of rebel fallen angels, otherwise called wicked spirits, or demons (Matt. 7:22). This device was later destined to be developed into a master system of deception, to be covered in volume two. But Satan's power will be broken. That was assured by Christ's triumphant death on the cross (John 12:31; 16:11). At our Lord's second advent Satan will be bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:3, 7). Then, at their close, the devil will make his supreme and final effort to overthrow the kingdom of God (vs. 7-9).

But Satan's rebellion will end in failure. He will be utterly defeated and destroyed, together with his fallen angels and all the human race who have followed him. They will be cast at last into the "lake of fire and brimstone" (v. 10). (The popular notion, it should be injected, that Satan, with horns and hoofs and pitchfork, now reigns in "hell" is utterly un-Biblical.) Because of the vital bearing of Satan, his evil angels, and his basic deceptions on the fate of man, let us scrutinize the inspired recital still more closely.

3. LUCIFER: HIGHEST ANGEL BECOMES LOWEST DEVIL.—According to Holy Writ the original fall took place in Heaven (Rev. 12:7-9), whence Lucifer, "son of the morning" or "day star" (Isa. 14:12, margin), author and instigator of sin, fell from Heaven. The true secret story is revealed by inspiration through the prophet Isaiah, who discloses what Lucifer had said in his "heart":

"I will ascend into heaven [the councils of Heaven], I will exalt my

throne above the stars of God [the angels, Job 38:7]: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation . . . : I will ascend above the heights . . . ; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14).

He thus aspired to be like God in power and glory, *but not in character*. And of his malign work after his fall the Inspired Record further states that he is the one who has "made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof," with his evil machinations. And further, significantly, he "opened not the house of his prisoners [or, "did not let his prisoners loose homewards," margin]" (v. 17), who lie (sleep) in the prison house of death, evidently the grave.

Ezekiel states that this fallen celestial being was created (Eze. 28:13, 15), and hence was not eternally pre-existent. He had been one of the "anointed," the glorious covering cherub (v. 16), standing in the very presence of God. Cherubim (mentioned many times as attending the throne of Deity) were assigned to guard the gates of Eden. And cherubim were placed upon the mercy seat of the ark in the symbolic provisions of redemption in Old Testament times. Lucifer was clearly a superterrestrial being, the mightiest of the angels. The portrayal further reveals that before his fall, Lucifer was perfect in all his ways (v. 15), as well as in beauty (v. 12). This, of course, was before "iniquity ["perversity"]" took possession of his heart.⁵

Satan became lifted up because of his superlative beauty and wisdom, and the splendor of his brightness (v. 17). In appearance he scintillated like a crown of jewels (v. 13). He was likewise a mighty musician (v. 13). So in these tremendous passages we have the inspired depiction of the author of sin and its beginnings in the universe. Sin actually began when Lucifer said, "*I will*"—in determining to usurp the place and prerogatives of God, and thus placing his will over against the will and government of God (Isa. 14:12, 13). Sin was thence later projected into the newly established Edenic circle on earth.

⁵ In this chapter God chose the earthly "prince of Tyrus"—who sought to assume the prerogatives of God (Eze. 28:1, 2), and whose heart was lifted up because of his "wisdom" and his "riches," but who would be overthrown (vs. 3, 10)—to symbolize none other than Satan himself, under the contrasting term "king of Tyrus" (vs. 12, 13).

Satan's identity and presence there are attested by Inspiration's telltale disclosure, "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God" (Eze. 28:13). There he was disclosed as the same "shining one," with power to enchant, fascinate, and bewitch. Thus it was actually Satan who, through the medium of the serpent, beguiled Eve and overwhelmed Adam.

4. SATAN'S DUAL LIE HAD BUT SINGLE POINT.—Satan's first utterance in Eden, made through the medium of the serpent, was, "Yea, hath God said?" In other words, Can it be that God hath said? It was ostensibly the asking of a question. But it was actually designed to elicit a concurring answer. The tempter was here impugning the veracity of God. He was *challenging the divine declaration of the fact of the mortality of man*. "YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE" (Gen. 3:4) was Satan's initial lie to man. And Christ expressly declared that Satan (the "old serpent," and "devil") is the "father" of lies—first uttered in Eden. It was an adroit, ingenious approach. Said Jesus, "He [the devil] . . . abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Whatever Satan says *in contradiction to God's word of truth* is manifestly a lie. So in Genesis 3:4, when he said to our first parents, "Ye shall *not* surely die," the father of lies was manifestly and historically telling his first lie on earth, for God had just said to Adam and Eve, "Thou *shalt* surely die" (Gen. 2:17)—if you transgress. Satan's declaration was consequently a direct, bald, unmitigated contradiction. By the insertion of the single negatory word "*not*" into God's declaration of truth, Satan perverted an immutable verity into a diabolical falsehood that has reverberated throughout all subsequent time.

But that was not all. Satan immediately added a *second lie*, likewise on the same "immortality" aspect of man's nature. It was: "Ye shall *be as gods* [that is, "as God," 'Elohîm]" (chap. 3:5). But according to inspiration, absolute and inalienable immortality is characteristic of, and belongs only to, God (1 Tim.

2nd
Ye

6:16; cf. 1:17). Man's immortality can be but *relative* and *conditional*, for it will be conferred, acquired, received.

In the very logic of the case, Innate Immortality cannot be an inherent quality in any *created or derived* being. And man, as a creature, is no exception. His life is not innate or inalienable, but only and always acquired. Hence it may be brought to an end. It cannot be overstressed that only God has absolute, primordial, indefeasible immortality. Consequently, any creature's arrogant claim to equality with God and His exclusive immortality is as groundless as it is presumptuous.

There is, of course, something extremely flattering to the pride of man in the idea of possessing a Godlike nature that is absolutely indestructible. But immortality is one of the most "majestic jewels" in the unique and solitary "diadem of Deity," as it has been impressively phrased. It is exclusively God's, for God is the "blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; *who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto*" (1 Tim. 6:15, 16). Therefore man's attempt to place the crown of immortality upon his own head is effrontery, and made only at gravest peril. Satan's presumption never had greater audacity, nor human gullibility a more tragic example. Indeed, it took the death of the Son of God to demonstrate the heinousness of that original dual lie in Eden.

VI. Essence of Fall Was Believing Satan's Lie

It cannot be overstressed that Satan's basic attack was on the veracity of the word of God as to the nature of man. That is why this entire episode of the "fall" is basic to our study of the issue, and that is why we dwell upon it. And the very fact that Satan's contention has been perpetuated primarily through all the major *pagan* religions and philosophies, and not through the long line of Hebrew prophets, is likewise of utmost significance. It was through *pagan* channels that Im-

mortal-Soulism found its fateful way into certain major sections of Judaism and Christianity.

So the acceptance of Satan's misrepresentation of the words of God, and his bold denial of the Creator's declaration as to the mortability of man, became the epochal turning point of the race at the very dawn of human history.

And never was Satan's astuteness more crafty than when he secured the well-nigh universal acceptance, in the pagan circles of antiquity, of his original lie in substitution for God's truth, for—let it be repeated—*the essence of the Fall consisted in believing Satan's lie instead of God's truth*. And the contention, "Ye shall not surely die," first whispered into the ears of Eve within the confines of Paradise, has continued to echo on through all the diversified corridors of time to this very day.

In due time, in pagan antiquity, Satan secured the well-nigh worldwide acceptance of his declaration of the universal Innate Immortality of the soul. Only among God's ancient people, the Hebrews, to whom were committed the protective "oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2), was it not accepted until shortly before the time of Christ, in the inter-Testament period, a period marked by grave departures. And then it was adopted only by a section of Jewry, chiefly in Alexandria, as we shall see, and with disastrous consequences.

The Gospel of Genesis 3:15

Proclaimed

*Gen 3 -
Redemption*

I. The Doom of Death and the Hope of Life

Let us return to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We left them eating of the forbidden fruit, their eyes blinded by the deception of Satan. Doubtless by the time the last of the fruit had been consumed, they began to realize that they had disobeyed their Creator. Cut off from the tree of life and doomed to death, Adam and Eve faced a future bleak with despair. The Bible describes their disillusionment and awakening to their condition: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7).

1. THE TERRORS OF DISOBEDIENCE.—They were not only naked, they were afraid. God had threatened them with death if they partook of the reserved tree. And almost as if in echo to their thoughts "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8).

But they soon discovered that running from God was useless, for God seemed determined to find them. The story continues:

"And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that



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Terror Strikes the Heart of Eve as She Realizes the Enormity of Her Act in Enticing Adam to Eat the Fruit of the Forbidden Tree of the Garden.

thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:9-13).

As the guilty pair stood frightened and ashamed before their Creator, He turned to the serpent, and through it cursed the tempter who caused the fall of His first earth children. As Adam and Eve listened they heard Him say:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

2. THE FIRST GLIMMER OF HOPE.—"Her seed." Adam and Eve had been commanded by God to multiply and replenish the earth. But so short a time had elapsed since their creation that they had as yet no children. If the "seed" of Eve



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Though Expelled From Eden Because of Sin, Redemption Through a Redeemer Was Promised at the Very Gates of Eden. Infinite Love Found a Way.

was to crush the head of the serpent, then God did not intend to carry out His threat of death for a time, at least. Here was the first glimmer of hope. Some one of Eve's descendants apparently was to win a victory over the serpent. The darkness began to lift.

This promise, dimly understood at first, was gradually expanded until the full plan of God for restoring guilty man to holiness was revealed to Adam's descendants.

II. Glorious Gospel Provisions Begin at Gates of Eden

The proclamation of the gospel of salvation, with its revelation of substitutionary atonement and pardon, and promise of restored life, and assurance of immortality, brought the light of hope again to man. God does not annul His laws nor abrogate His commands. Neither does He work contrary to

them. But He does contravene the havoc wrought by sin through introducing a new provision of love-born grace. He thus transforms and restores, and through His grace He brings a blessing out of disaster. That was the Edenic covenant of life and salvation made that fateful day. Hope sprang anew.

1. BECOMES FATHER OF RACE UNDER NEW PROBATION.—

This new dispensation of grace and mercy provided the second chance for man. It extended Adam's earthly life, made provision for regaining his lost innocency, and gave assurance of ultimate immortality for man. It enabled Adam to become the father of the human race. But the fact that the life of the sinner was temporarily extended does not set aside the possibility of punishment for subsequent sins. They must be met. The "wages of sin" still continue to be "death" (Rom. 6:23). Grace does not nullify the law and will of God.

2. TREE OF CALVARY BECOMES THIRD TREE OF EDEN.—

Man's redemption revolves around the *third* (as it may be called) of these three epochal trees of Eden—the tree of life, established for sustaining man's life throughout eternity; the testing tree of the knowledge of good and evil, used by Satan to accomplish man's ruin; and now the *tree of Calvary* (1 Peter 2:24; Acts 5:30; 10:39)—as the cross was significantly called—planted as it were at the very gates of Eden for man's redemption and the restoration of his forfeited life, to assure access again in the earth made new to the withdrawn tree of life (Rev. 2:7; 22:2).

So it was that man's original sin became the starting point for all the subsequent disclosures of God's unfathomable love and grace. And as by sin the man Adam lost his potential, or provisional, immortality, so by the Man Christ Jesus full provision has been made for its restoration. Thus the dismal doom of the death sentence upon Adam was changed to a glorious assurance of life—conditioned on the acceptance of the gospel provisions set forth. But the plan of redemption and restored immortality meant the traversing of the path of Gethsemane

and Golgotha, with the shadows of the tomb to follow, for the Divine Substitute and Saviour of men. That was the price to be paid for the rescue of man from the doom of death.

3. PLACED ON PROBATION, GIVEN SECOND CHANCE.—So it was that instead of letting the law of transgression, with its dire death penalty, take its wonted course, the Lord God Himself (Jehovah the Creator—Gen. 2:4) invoked the provision of probation, devised in the love, mercy, and wisdom of God before ever the earth came into being. Through this plan the second person of the Godhead would become man, take man's place, receive his penalty, and die in his stead (John 1:29). Thus the principle of substitution and vicarious atonement through the death of another was instituted, that man might be forgiven and restored—for “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

In the mind and covenant and provision of God, Christ the “Lamb of God” was “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), thus providing lost and estranged man with his second chance, not after death but during his earthly lifetime. Christ's death met every requirement of law and justice, blended with grace and mercy,¹ and so offered pardon, restoration, and life to lost man.

III. Promised Seed Is Master Key to Atonement Mysteries

The promised Seed of Genesis 3:15 is the master key that unlocks the divine revelation of redemption of the race. Everything centers in and around this assurance of the Seed (Gen. 3:15; 12:7; 22:18; Ps. 89:3, 4; 2 Sam. 7:12). And the promised Seed was Christ, to come in the flesh²: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as

¹ The sacrifice of Christ was *penal* (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21); *substitutional* (Lev. 1:4; Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21); *voluntary* (John 10:18); *redemptive* (1 Cor. 6:20; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7); *propitiatory* (Rom. 3:25); *reconciliatory* (2 Cor. 5:18, 19; Col. 1:21, 22); and *efficacious* (John 12:32, 33; Rom. 5:9, 10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:11, 12, 26; 10:10-17; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5).

² John 7:40-42; Acts 3:25, 26; Rom. 1:3; Gal. 3:16, 19; 2 Tim. 2:8.

of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

1. "HIGHWAY OF THE SEED" BEGINS.—This initial promise of the Seed, the Redeemer, involves the deepest mysteries of the atonement—Christ "made" to be "sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21), vicariously bearing our judgment, typified by the uplifted brazen serpent, made in the symbolic likeness of the fiery serpents that had brought death to Israel (Num. 21:5-9; John 3:14, 15), just like the serpent in Eden. Even so was Christ to be lifted up. And here begins what has aptly been called the "Highway of the Seed,"³ stretching magnificently across the centuries—a chain of promises and prophecies concerning Christ, fulfilled through Abel, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David—and reaching to Immanuel-Christ.⁴

2. CONFLICT OF THE AGES BEGINS.—The Seed of the woman, in the prediction, would bruise, or crush, the serpent's head—head in Hebrew symbolism signifying the essence of the being. This was a promise of the ultimate destruction of Satan, a prediction that the very root of all evil would finally be destroyed by Christ. There, back in Eden, began the grim conflict of the ages between Christ and Satan—Satan being the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), at the head of a host of fallen angels (Matt. 25:41)—evil spirits seeking possession of living men, and simulating the dead through impersonating people who have died. This last feature will be noted later.

3. PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE FALL TO US.—But that which is of paramount importance to us today is the actual, incontestable, and universal fact of sin. And the paralleling fact that until and unless one is "born again," or regenerated spiritually, he is today in a state of enmity and rebellion against

³ The Old Testament provides a prophetic biography of Christ in the flesh, listed here for those desiring to follow this through: Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 49:8-10; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 11:1-5; 2 Samuel 7; Micah 5:2; Daniel 9; Hosea 11:1; Isa. 40:9-11; Mal. 3:1; Isaiah 42 and 53; Zech. 11:13; 12:10; 13:7; Ps. 41:9; Ex. 12:46; Psalms 22 and 16; 68:18; 110:1; 118:22, 23.
⁴ Gen. 6:8-10; 9:26, 27; 12:1-4; 17:19-21; 28:10-14; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:15-17; Matt. 1:1, 20-23; 1 John 3:8; John 12:31.

God. As a consequence, everlasting life is forfeit to us as verily as to Adam. Likewise excluded from Paradise, we are born into a world smitten with a curse, born of fallen progenitors, born under the sentence of death.

But from this bleak prospect the gates of eternal glory open to repenting sinners today because of the promised "seed." It was this gracious grant of probationary time and opportunity that opened the way to eternal life restored, to be received through Christ (John 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:10).

IV. "Coats of Skins" Typified Righteousness of Christ

Adam's transgression in violating the stipulated and revealed will of God, and thus stepping over the boundary line from obedience to disobedience, was *sin*. And the wages of sin is always death (Rom. 6:23). Man had disobeyed the express command of God, and had lost his innocence and purity. He was now in rebellion against God, which condition resulted in a consciousness of alienation and separation. If man was not to perish, sin must be punished and the sinner restored to purity, obedience, and fellowship with God.

But his sin could only be covered by the righteous obedience of another, who alone could provide the requisite righteousness that would enable man, polluted by sin and estranged from God, to stand without alienation in His presence again.

1. DIVINE PROPITIATION PROVIDED.—The Divine Record simply states that the Lord God (Jehovah, their Creator—Gen. 2:4) made "coats of skins and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21), thus for the first time typifying Christ Jesus, who is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness" (1 Cor. 1:30). These divinely provided garments replaced the man-made covering of fig leaves (Gen. 3:7), and made it possible for earth's first sinners to stand in God's presence again.⁵ These skins were prob-

⁵ See Isaiah 61:10—"For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." And in Revelation 19:8 the garment for the saints, symbolizing righteousness, is called the "fine linen, which is the righteousness of saints."

ably from the animals offered up in sacrifice, as part of the symbolic worship of the sacrificial system then established, and as a type of divine propitiation soon to be revealed in greater fullness.

Thus man's Creator became his Redeemer. And as Bunyan well phrased it, the sinner was "shrouded" under the provided righteousness of Christ.⁹ It is also essential to note that salvation apart from righteousness, obedience, and sacrifice is unknown either in the Old Testament or in the New. God thus provided the requisite righteousness by the sacrifice in Christ.

2. DEEPEST MYSTERIES OF ATONEMENT UNFOLDED.—The deepest mysteries of the atonement thus begin to appear—Christ becoming man's sin-bearer and his sin-offering, taking man's place and punishment, and providing for man's restoration. And the righteousness provided is none other than Christ Himself, who fully met in our stead and behalf every demand of the law, and is Himself "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness" (1 Cor. 1:30). Or as the apostle Paul graphically puts it: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

V. Christ's Central Place in Gospel of Eden

1. BECOMES SON OF MAN TO RESTORE LOST MAN.—The headship of the human race was vested, through creation, in the first, and now fallen, Adam. And full redemption from the ruin of the fall of man is brought about by the sinless, spotless Christ (1 Peter 1:19), the "second," or "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45, 47)—Himself truly human yet truly divine, the one and only God-man.

Christ Himself in His own person was the divine medium and method of salvation. Thus it was that the Word, or Son of God, was made flesh (John 1:1-3, 14) in order to redeem man.

⁹ See Rom. 3:26; 4:6; 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9.



The Pivotal Point of All Sacred History, the Atoning Death of Christ Followed by His Triumphant Resurrection, Was the Pledge of the Resurrection and Immortalization of All the Redeemed of All Ages.

He was made flesh in order that He might suffer and die in man's stead (Heb. 10:5; Ps. 40:6; Isa. 42:1; Phil. 2:7; Rom. 8:3). In Biblical phrasing He took upon Himself human nature "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2: 14, 15).

Through this act of amnesty Christ then and there identified Himself with man, not only for the time that He lived here among men but for all eternity. And time may be defined as that portion of eternity marked off for the creation, probation, and redemption of the human race and the final disposition of sin. Or, it may be called the great parenthesis between the eternity of the past and the eternity of the future, with Christ the central figure of both time and all eternity.

Eighty-seven times in the New Testament, Christ designated Himself as the "Son of man"—the first time in Matthew 8:20. This was His racial name, His human appellation as the representative man and Redeemer of the race (Luke 19:10), just as in the Old Testament He is frequently called the Son of David, in the line of the Seed. In other words, "Son of man" is primarily His human title, just as "Son of God" is His divine name. But through His incarnation He so completely identified Himself with the human race, as its Redeemer, that when He returns to earth the second time in glory He comes as the Son of man (Matt. 24:27-31; Luke 12:40). (In the Old Testament He so appears in Daniel 7:13.)

So it was that in due time Christ *died* for the sinner—in his stead. He became a curse for him, became sin for him, gave Himself for him, was made an offering and a sacrifice to God for him, redeemed him, justified him, saved him from wrath, purchased him by His own blood, reconciled him by His own death, saved him by His own life—and thereby provided for his forfeited life a restored life forevermore. It was a case of true and complete substitution, that the recipients of His salvation might receive His righteousness and partake of His endless life (Heb. 7:16). That is the wonder and the glory of the gospel of Genesis 3:15, enfolded in embryo in that first simple promise and prophecy.

2. ASSUMES HIS TRUE AND CENTRAL PLACE.—Here, then, the gospel of Genesis begins—the inspired account of the beginnings of human redemption, progressively unfolding throughout the Book of God. The Bible is therefore simply the wondrous record of God's provision to restore the divine "image" that fallen man had lost, and to recover for him the immortality that had been forfeited. This purpose became the supreme object of the incarnation of the Son of God, leading to His atoning death, triumphant resurrection, and assured return. It is a revelation of supreme love beyond comparison and human comprehension.

Our mortal condition as members of a sinful race necessi-

tates a new birth in order that we may be fitted for the life that shall never end. And as God "only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16), the Deity as well as the humanity of the Saviour, as the One through whom alone this new life is obtained, is therefore basic. Hence the salvation that He offers is not a casual matter, or even a heavenly boon, but a prime necessity to be sought for earnestly and accepted gratefully.

Redemption is an act of grace in which Christ assumes His true and central place in the plan and provision of salvation. Thus not only His first coming but His second advent—with its attendant resurrection of the dead, final judgment, and bestowal of everlasting life—all come to assume their vital place in the belief of the church both of Old Testament and of New Testament times. And all this stems from Genesis 3:15.

3. PROCESSES AND PROVISIONS OF REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION.—The uniform testimony of both the Old and the New Testament is that the supreme object of redemption is to change man's fallen nature, not only from sin to holiness but from mortality to ultimate immortality—from a nature now perishable in all its parts to one that is to be incorruptible and destined to live forever.

As seen, this provision for the bestowal of everlasting life involved the incarnation of the Word, or Son of God, who was before all things and created all things (John 1:1-4, 10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:2), but who became flesh (Heb. 2:14; 1 Tim. 3:16), taking upon Himself our nature, "yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). And as Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, He died on the cross as our atoning Sacrifice. He thenceforth became the mighty mediator for man before the Father, thus uniting grace and mercy with the justice and righteousness of God, and so vindicating His divine law and government.

His divine nature is wondrously united with man's nature in the provision of regeneration, through the incoming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is the "Spirit of Life" of none other than the Lord and Giver of life (Rom. 8:2, 10). Thus it is that holiness and immortality are made available

C.
creator.
Saviour.

C.
mediator

to the believer by the life, death, resurrection, and mediation of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:10). Consequently, redemption from death to endless life depends on this union of humanity and divinity, first in Christ through His incarnation, and then in us through regeneration. The nature which has *broken* the law becomes united with the life and nature of the Giver, Upholder, and *Keeper* of the law. Thus sin's victims are snatched from the great destroyer's hand forevermore.

4. ENABLING PROVISIONS OF REDEMPTION.—It was possible for Adam in his perfect state of sinlessness before the Fall to develop a righteous character by loyal obedience to God's commands. But this he failed to do. Now, not only because of Adam's sin, but because of our own sins as well, our natures as well as his are fallen. We are not innocent as was Adam when created, and therefore cannot achieve righteousness by means of our own obedience, because we ourselves are powerless to obey. Our fallen natures must be transformed, and divine power obtained.

Christ came to provide both the requisite righteousness and the enabling power and grace. He lived amid temptation but without sin. He took our sins vicariously that He might first impute His righteousness to us to cover our past sins, and then impart His righteousness by making His enabling grace and power available to care for our present spiritual needs and deficiencies. That was the divine plan of redemption, as spelled out under the gospel, first initiated in Eden after the Fall.

The Penalty of Death for Disobedience

When God placed man in the Garden He told him plainly, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16, 17).

The message of God could hardly have been clearer. He declared that He would punish disobedience with death. This Adam and Eve understood full well, for Eve referred to the death threat when she parleyed with the serpent. And as intimated, it was doubtless fear of punishment that prompted the guilty pair to flee in terror when they heard God calling them in the Garden. Let us return to the frightened pair standing before their insulted Maker that fateful day in Eden.

I. A Second Chance Provided for the Sinner

I. A REPRIEVE GRANTED ADAM AND EVE.—God has just cursed the serpent, and in doing so He has intimated to Adam and Eve that a reprieve has been granted—in fact, that a second chance is being offered them. This is no disavowal of God's original intention to punish disobedience with death. As we have already seen, this death penalty deserved by them had already been accepted by His Son, the second person of the Godhead. In this sense Christ was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Provision for paying the debt of sin was already made before God faced His erring creatures with their guilt.



DICK HUGHES, ARTIST © 1959 BY THE REVIEW AND HERALD

Expelled From the Garden, Adam and Eve Were Cut Off From Access to the Tree of Life, and Faced the Terrifying Prospect of Death, as Forewarned by the Almighty.

And now God turns to man on probation, with his second chance before him, and sets forth the changed conditions of his life:

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. . . .

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:16-24).

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF PROBATION FOR RACE.—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Thus God passed sentence on the sinners before Him. After a life of toil, sorrow, and care, dissolution back into dust would be the fate of every man on earth. Children would be born, generation would follow generation, but death would close the history of each life. The immediate cause for this changed condition of affairs was separation from the tree of life. God did not intend to have a race of immortal sinners on His newly created earth. So He withdrew the tree of life from man’s access. And man became mortal—*subject to death*. The potential immortality with which man was endowed at creation was withdrawn, and man looked forward to the end of life.

The entire human race, and each person born therein, was thus assured of a period of probation for testing, just as Adam had in the beginning. Salvation from sin is offered to all, and each may accept or reject it. This racial probation gave time for Satan to fully develop his plans and demonstrate his principles before the universe. And it also provided time for God to demonstrate, through the gift of His Son, how salvation may be attained and immortality received through the provisions of the gospel.

II. Adam Died Judicially on Day of Transgression

Perplexity is often expressed over the clause, “For *in the day* that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). The simple fact is that, judicially and implicitly, Adam did die on the day that he sinned. He thereupon became a mortal, dying creature. His doom was fixed, his fate sealed. He passed under the irrevocable sentence of death. His life was forfeit, and he began to die. Although he might live on for an hour, a week, a year (or 930 years, as Adam did—Gen. 5:5), it was but a respite under condemnation, a delay, or stay, of execution. If, however, he were to live forever, there must be a rescue, a redemption, an act of amnesty and grace. Otherwise, the death

debt incurred must be paid in full. He must in due time *die*. That is the fundamental point.

1. RHETORICAL FIGURE OF PROLEPSIS EMPLOYED.—This warning of immediate death is held by many able Bible students to be an instance of what in rhetoric is called *prolepsis*—an anticipation of that which is future as if it were already present. It is a common figure of speech. Thus, when one is falling over a precipice, has taken poison, or has committed a capital crime, he is often referred to as a “dead man”—even if he should live on for days, weeks, months, or even years.

When the angel of death had smitten their first-born, the affrighted Egyptians cried out, “We be all dead men” (Ex. 12:33). When Aaron’s rod budded in condemnation of the rebels, the Israelites exclaimed, “Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish” (Num. 17:12). Even God Himself employed similar words in addressing the presumptuous Abimelech: “Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken” (Gen. 20:3).

2. OTHER INSTANCES ARE NOT MISUNDERSTOOD.—A strikingly similar expression occurred when Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die” (Ex. 10:28). Yet no one would think the king faithless to his word if, under sentence, Moses waited for some time for execution. Again, when Solomon gave charge to Shimei concerning the tenure of his forfeited life, he declared: “It shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die” (1 Kings 2:37). Yet none would contend that he must flee, be arrested, tried, and executed all on the same twenty-four hour day. Thus he exclaims, “Thy blood shall be upon thine own head.” The intent is clear.

So, out of it all, one thing is sure: The execution of the Edenic sentence upon Adam, “Thou shalt surely die,” would indicate anything rather than the thought that man was to live

on in endless immortality.³ Had there been no redemption, Adam would have utterly perished.

3. SANDS IN TIME'S HOURGLASS BEGIN FALLING.—The death that God threatened actually began in Eden on the very day of transgression, as Adam came under sentence of death. When, after Adam's transgression, God declared to him, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19), He was but passing the sentence of which He had previously warned, "In the day that thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:17).

From that day preparation was under way for the ultimate execution of the sentence. On that very day Adam was ejected from the Garden of Eden, where grew that life-giving tree of life, the eating of the fruit of which would have perpetuated obedient life forever. He was now cut off from the channel through which deathlessness was designed to flow to him. The sands in time's hourglass of existence had now begun to fall.

4. FINALITY OF DEATH IMPOSED NOT SPECIFIED.—But as to the *duration*, or finality, of the death decreed for disobedience—whether it would be final and irrevocable, with no awakening; or, whether life would be restored through a resurrection, for final award or punishment—not one word was said in advance. That omission was surely designed, making it possible for God to bring forward at the appropriate time and circumstance the provision of grace through Christ that He had purposed before sin entered the world. But the *sentence of death*, whether the first natural death, or the final second death, was passed upon all men.

III. Encompassing Involvements of Death Penalty

Man, because of his sin, was now on his way to destruction. Without divine intervention he would have been doomed to

³ In twenty other places the same term, "surely die," occurs, and all of them refer to *literal* death. See Gen. 20:7; 1 Sam. 22:16; 1 Kings 2:37, 42; Jer. 26:8; Eze. 3:18; 33:8, 14; etc.

return to the nothingness, or nonbeing, whence the Creator had brought him into existence at creation. But divine mercy had already intervened. The promised Seed, or Saviour, was to come and exhaust the death penalty, and regain the lost life—eternal life—for man. The blow that in justice should fall on man was to fall on Christ. Death at the close of life's tenure, the return to dust, was to be simply a "sleep," from which all would be awakened by a resurrection from this initial, or "first," death.

God set His attested seal upon the gospel of the resurrection by raising Jesus from the dead—His resurrection becoming the pledge of our own in due course. Otherwise there would be no assurance, no tangible guarantee, of life beyond the grave. But the promise and provision of Christ, the Redeemer, provide that assurance. Thus the light of the radiant gospel of life was injected into the impenetrable darkness of death at the very gates of Eden.

1. "DEATH" EMBRACES TOTAL PUNISHMENT FOR SIN.—Death was the total penalty that was forewarned upon Adam by God as punishment for that primal sin. All that God purposed to inflict upon Adam and his posterity because of transgression was comprehended within that single word "death." "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *die*," was the solemn but all-inclusive decree (Gen. 2:17). That clearly meant complete loss of life, deprivation of being, forfeiture of existence.

2. JUSTICE REQUIRES PENALTY BE UNDERSTOOD.—Elemental justice requires that the penalty for a transgression be explicitly stated, so it may be unmistakably understood by all who may be involved. And in this instance that penalty is declared, according to the term "die," as just noted, to be loss of life, cessation of being and existence—not, as some later came to contend, eternal living existence in endless agony. It would be a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and most direct words, that by *death* should

be meant *eternal life in misery and perpetual torment*, as later advocated first in paganism, then in Jewry, and finally in a major segment of Christianity.

Christ must have suffered the very penalty to which sinning man was sentenced at the beginning, for Christ bore our sins. Consequently, an eternal life in misery can form no true part of the meaning of death (Rom. 5:7, 8; 6:10; Heb. 2:9). Christ did not endure Eternal Torment. He was raised the third day. The ultimate penalty for sins is the cancellation of life when the true objective has been lost (Eze. 18:4, 13, 18). And inasmuch as God gave life initially to the human race, He could by the same power withdraw that life if man sinned. And that is just what the death sentence means.

3. "SECOND DEATH" COMPLETES THE DEATH PENALTY.—The initial death, at the end of the natural life (and which in the Bible is called a sleep), is a consequence of racial or universal sin. The first, or natural, death is not the penalty to be paid for our personal sins. Descendants are not punished for the sins of their ancestors, unless they persist in their ancestors' sins. The initial death that overtook Adam and Eve was not the end. The punitive death for unrepented sin is the second death, and does not come until after the second resurrection for the execution of judgment.

That will be a death of both soul and body, which involves final and irretrievable loss of the total life (Matt. 10:28; Mal. 4:1; Rev. 20:14). So man's first death is not the end; it is only the first, or natural, death, which passed upon all men (Rom. 5:12). The second death, which will bring about the completion of the death penalty, will be executed only upon the obdurately evil.

Let us consider it another way: The wicked die the first time in their sins, but the second time (after their resurrection, Rev. 20:5, 6), they die for their sins (Eze. 18:26). It is appointed unto all men "once to die" (Heb. 9:27). All die the first time because they became mortal as a result of Adam's transgression. In the matter of this first death men have no

choice. But it is a matter of complete and inescapable choice as to whether we die the first death *in our sins*, or are saved and safe *in Christ*. For if we die *in Christ*, then the second death will have no power over us (Rev. 20:6). And the second death, which is eternal, can be averted by accepting Christ's provision of salvation.

4. "SECOND DEATH" IS LOSS OF LIFE, NOT CONTINUANCE.—We would stress this point, that the *second* death—for unrepented of and unpardoned sin—is not to be confounded with the first death, which all men, whether saved or lost, undergo alike as the children of Adam. This is often misunderstood.

The *second* death applies only to *future* punishment—for the *second* death is the punishment for *personal, unconfessed sin*, just as everlasting life is the reward of *individual righteousness*, received through and in Christ.

Thus *loss* of life was the doom pronounced against sin. But this loss of life is not simply implied in Scripture. It is definitely stated to be the punishment determined—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Eze. 18:4, 20; cf. 3:18). ✓

OT— The Old Testament explicitly and repeatedly describes this loss of life, or existence, as the reversion of the organized being into its original elements—reduction to what it was before it was called into being. Here are a few of the less-known texts:

"The *destruction* of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they . . . shall be *consumed*" (Isa. 1:28).

"Prepare them for the day of *slaughter*" (Jer. 12:3).

"The *slain* of the Lord shall be many" (Isa. 66:16).

"They shall go forth, and look upon the *carcasses* of the men that have transgressed" (Isa. 66:24).

"He shall destroy them" (Ps. 28:5).

"The transgressors shall be *destroyed together*: the end of the wicked shall be *cut off*" (Ps. 37:38).

They shall be rooted "out of the land" (Ps. 52:5).

"Let them be *blotted out of the book of the living*" (Ps. 69:28); et cetera.

Every clear-cut Old Testament declaration on the punishment of the wicked states it to be loss of life, not continuance—dissolution of life into its original elements, as though one had never been called into existence as an *entity*. And while the redeemed are to have life immortal which knows no end, the lost will succumb to the second death, which knows no awakening.

5. DOOM APPLIES TO MAN AS A WHOLE.—God's sentence declared, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). This pronouncement was more explicitly explained *after* man's transgression, as related to his person. But there is nothing in the context that minimizes or changes the meaning or force of the words or limits their all-inclusive application.

There is no hint of a distinction between body and soul in the application of Adam's destined doom. The *whole man sinned.* And the sentence appearing in the Inspired Record applies to man as a whole. Accordingly, as with the sentence so with its execution—the man, without redemption, would at death utterly and forever cease to live. Such would have been the final, tragic outcome had it not been for the divine plan and provision of salvation. This involves man's being brought back to life, through resurrection, for pronouncement of sentence based upon a just judgment, and then for final reward or punishment.

IV. Supreme Argument Against Eternal Torment

1. DEATH PENALTY STEMS FROM LAW AND AUTHORITY.—Punishment implies the existence of law. And law involves authority. But no law can have binding force unless it is buttressed by penalty for infraction. Moreover, punishment is inflicted upon the violator by the same authority from which the law proceeds. There can therefore be no legitimate penalty threatened, nor punishment inflicted, where there is no law or authority (Rom. 5:13). But God, the Creator of man, had given

an express command and warning to our forebears in Eden (Gen. 2:16, 17). And Adam and Eve had violated the explicit command and broken the declared law, or word, of God, and so had incurred the statutory penalty forewarned.

As we have seen, death—in the sense of forfeiture of life and extinction of being through withdrawal of life—was the stated penalty for infraction of the divine command. This is the uniform teaching of the Bible from cover to cover in all its multiple forms of statement—whether of doctrine, warning, statute, exhortation, promise, or prediction, and as amplified in parable, figure, and illustration. The uniform penalty in all forms is, “The soul that *sinneth*, it shall *die*” (Eze. 18:4, 20); or in the New Testament, “The *wages* of sin is *death*” (Rom. 6:23). Or, to change to one of the figures, the inevitable *harvest* from the sowing of the seed of sin is destruction (Matt. 13:30). The essence of it all is that “sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:15).

2. QUESTION SETTLED AT HIGHEST LEVEL.—We repeat, “death” means cessation of life, *not eternal life in torment*. Strange contention of some that to *perish* is to *live on forever!* That, of course, is a complete contradiction. Here is the supreme argument against the alien concept of the Eternal Torment of the sinner: If the death that threatened Adam were eternal torture, then it would have necessitated that our Saviour, as man’s complete Substitute, must be tormented eternally in order to receive man’s allotted punishment and pay his designated debt. But no one is prepared to contend that such is true as regards our Saviour.

If, on the contrary, the penalty of *death is loss of life*, as executed upon Christ on the cross, then Jesus must die by literally giving up His life in our stead, thus meeting the full demands of the law for our sins. And this is precisely what He did. That is consideration of the question at the highest level. That is the supreme and decisive evidence. Christ died, just as Adam was to die.

V. Sleep the Beautiful Euphemism for Death

1. FIRST A SLEEP, WITH RESURRECTION AWAKENING.—Since the Bible states, "It is appointed unto [all] men once to die," and after death the "judgment" (Heb. 9:27), the "first," or natural, death, is simply a temporary cessation of life, which the Bible pictures as a "sleep." The gospel makes provision for another life through the resurrection awakening—a second and eternal life for all who accept the gospel of Christ (2 Tim. 1:10) and are fitted for it.

The same gospel also reveals the irrevocable "second death," from which there is a resurrection unto damnation for those who reject the gospel (John 5:28, 29), and no hope for those who lack fitness for immortality. All those who reject the sole means of salvation will be lost forever. There will be no immortal sinners. But let us examine the figure of "sleep."

2. IMPLICATIONS OF THE METAPHOR OF SLEEP.—The Old Testament consistently speaks of death under this metaphor of "sleep"—like falling asleep at night. So this intermediate state, between death and the resurrection, is for good and evil alike, and is thus likened to the hours of unconscious rest. The resurrection is compared to the experience of awakening to a new day. Death is repeatedly declared to be a deep, unconscious, unbroken sleep until the resurrection morn.

Thus in Holy Writ, "Man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their *sleep*" (Job 14:12). The psalmist said, "Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of death*" (Ps. 13:3). And the prophet Daniel adds, "Many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake"—at the resurrection (Dan. 12:2). This is the unvarying testimony of the Old Testament. And the New Testament does not deviate from this in the slightest degree. Rather, it elaborates upon it.

Sleep, then, is a condition of suspended activity and unconscious rest. Thus the dead are repeatedly declared to be "at rest" (Job 3:17, 18; 17:16; Dan. 12:13; Rev. 14:13). And

this intermediate state is defined as one of inactivity and silence (Ps. 6:5; cf. Rev. 14:13). The Hebrew concept of this unconscious sleep, in *she'ól*, or gravedom, is seen in such statements by the psalmist as:

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth [dust]; in that very day *his thoughts perish*" (Ps. 146:4).

"In death [*she'ól*, the grave] there is no remembrance of thee" (Ps. 6:5).

"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (Ps. 115:17).

3. TIME OBLITERATED TO THE SLEEPER.—Sleep obliterates the space, or span, between death and the resurrection. It has no perceptible passage of time. This Biblical concept of death as a sleep makes the Second Advent equally near to every generation and to every individual believer—to the first as verily as to the last. To both, our Lord is equally nigh, even at the door.

Death, as a sleep, is not therefore a long, conscious, stretching blank of centuries or millenniums. A century is as short as a moment, a millennium as brief as the twinkling of an eye. The next conscious instant after falling asleep will be the day of redemption. Death is followed by rising, going to sleep by awakening.

Such a gracious provision, it is to be noted, robs death of its gloom and its sense and dread of long separation. Thus the twilight hour of death is succeeded, through the resurrection, by the dawn of eternal day for the righteous. But, alas, it is followed by an everlasting night of utter destruction for the wicked, after their resurrection for the execution of the judgment (Rev. 20:5, 6, 14, 15; 21:8).

4. "SLEEP" IS UNDEVIATING SYNONYM FOR "DEATH."—"Sleep" is consequently the common Biblical synonym for "death." Beginning with its initial application to Moses ("Behold, thou shalt *sleep* with thy fathers,"² Deut. 31:16), and then to David ("Thou shalt *sleep* with thy fathers," 2 Sam.

² That this meant Moses was to *die* is plainly stated in Deuteronomy 32:48-51. He *died* and was buried (Deut. 34:5-7; Joshua 1:1, 2).

7:12), and Job ("Now shall I *sleep* in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be," Job 7:21), we find that this beautiful euphemism runs like an unbroken thread all through the Old and New Testaments, ending with Peter's "since the fathers fell asleep" (2 Peter 3:4).³

This chosen synonym for death occurs no less than sixty-six times in seventeen books of the Sacred Canon, including its considered use by Jesus Himself (Matt. 9:24; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52; John 11:11). These frequent occurrences are so important and significant, and impressive, that all Old Testament usages are tabulated here for reference, that the eye may quickly run down this meaningful tabulation. Thus the scope and weight of evidence quickly become apparent. The term, it will be observed, is used of good and evil alike—of Ahab as well as of David. Here are the texts:

- Deut. 31:16—"Thou [Moses] shalt *sleep* with thy fathers."
 2 Sam. 7:12—"Thou [David] shalt *sleep* with thy fathers."
 1 Kings 1:21—"The king shall *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 2:10—"So David *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 11:21—"David *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 11:43—"Solomon *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 14:20—"He [Jeroboam] *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 14:31—"Rehoboam *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 15:8—"Abijam *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 15:24—"Asa *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 16:6—"Baasha *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 16:28—"Omri *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 22:40—"Ahab *sleep* with his fathers."
 1 Kings 22:50—"Jehoshaphat *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 8:24—"Joram *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 10:35—"Jehu *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 13:9—"Jehoahaz *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 13:13—"Joash *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 14:16—"Jehoash *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 14:22—"The king *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 14:29—"Jeroboam *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 15:7—"Azariah *sleep* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 15:22—"Menahem *sleep* with his fathers."

³ The seventeen New Testament references are: Matt. 9:24; 27:52; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52; John 11:11 (twice); Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor. 7:39 (*koimaō*, "fall asleep"; see Rotherham); 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20; 1 Thess. 4:13, 14, 15; 2 Peter 3:4—in all four Gospels, the Acts, and two of Paul's Epistles, as well as in Peter.

- 2 Kings 15:38—"Jotham *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 16:20—"Ahaz *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 20:21—"Hezekiah *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 21:18—"Manasseh *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Kings 24:6—"Jehoiakim *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 9:31—"Solomon *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 12:16—"Rehoboam *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 14:1—"Abijah *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 16:13—"Asa *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 21:1—"Jehoshaphat *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 26:2—"The king *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 26:23—"Uzziah *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 27:9—"Jotham *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 28:27—"Ahaz *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 32:33—"Hezekiah *slept* with his fathers."
 2 Chron. 33:20—"Manasseh *slept* with his fathers."
 Job 3:13—"I should have *slept*."
 Job 7:21—"Now shall I *sleep* in the dust."
 Job 14:12—"Nor be raised out of their *sleep*."
 Ps. 13:3—"Lest I *sleep* the *sleep* of death."
 Ps. 76:5—"They have *slept* their *sleep*."
 Ps. 76:6—"Cast into a dead *sleep*."
 Ps. 90:5—"They are as a *sleep*."
 Jer. 51:39—"Sleep a perpetual *sleep*."
 Jer. 51:57—"Sleep a perpetual *sleep*."
 Dan. 12:2—"Them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth."

Sleep, then, is beyond question the established Biblical term for man's state in death.

Redemption in the Period of the Sacrificial Altar

The basic difference between the plan of redemption in Old Testament and in New Testament times is largely one of perspective and direction. The Old Testament believers looked *forward* to a suffering Messiah to come, One who would take away sin by the substitutionary sacrifice of Himself. The later New Testament believers looked *back* to the tremendous transaction of the cross as the accomplished fact, and *upward* to an ascended ministering Priest and just Judge, who is to come again at the end of the age as conquering King.

The Person is the same in both cases, but the method of manifesting faith in His sovereign efficacy differs. In the Old Testament, saving faith was exhibited by symbolic sacrifices and services pointing forward to the Lamb of God to come, who would take away the sin of the world. But from the cross onward, with the great transaction of Calvary an accomplished fact, salvation was now by simple faith in a crucified, risen, ascended, ministering, and returning Lord. Note its earlier operation, first with the children of the primal pair, then among the patriarchs, and finally among the prophets of Israel, in Old Testament times.

I. Cain and Abel Tested by Sacrificial Offering System

Next in historical sequence after the expulsion from Eden the test was applied to Cain and Abel, Adam and Eve's first descendants, as recorded in Genesis 4. This particular test



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By His Offering Abel Recognized the Principle of Atoning Blood Substitution, and Aroused the Hatred of Self-sufficient Cain With His Disobedient, Bloodless Offering.

was likewise designed to prove whether they too would believe in and obey the word of God. In accordance with previous instruction Abel brought “of the firstlings of his flock”—a type of the coming Christ, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Cain, on the contrary, brought only an offering “of the fruit of the ground,” which was not in compliance with the divine directive.

The brothers obviously understood the purpose of the system of offerings that God had ordained, designed to express personal faith (Heb. 11:4) in the atoning death of a coming Saviour. This involved the symbolic sin offerings. These bloody sacrifices dramatized the underlying principle that “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).¹

Such was the ordained way of acceptable approach to God, instituted immediately after the Fall.

¹ This is the essence and foundation of the doctrine of substitution and blood atonement—“life for a life.” The “wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), and “without shedding of blood [and thus giving up the life] is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

1. FATAL LACK IN CAIN'S BLOODLESS OFFERING.—Abel followed God's instructions. Therefore God had "respect unto Abel and to his offering" (Gen. 4:4). But Cain brought only a bloodless offering of the fruit of the ground—the product of his own labor. The fundamental principle of substitutionary sacrifice was thus omitted—the declared recognition of the need of a Redeemer. That is why "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb. 11:4). Taking God at His word, he had grasped the basic principle of salvation—sin, penalty, death, substitution, and restoration—with righteousness and life received through the vicarious, sacrificial atonement of another. Abel's sacrifice clearly represented Christ, laden with the sinner's sins, in the sinner's place and stead. Cain's bloodless offering may have been an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God and an act of worship, but there was no recognition of the forfeiture of his own life because of his sin nor of his need of salvation from its penalty of death.²

Abel, on the other hand, pouring out the lifeblood of the innocent victim, acknowledged the forfeiture of his own life and sought the mercy of God through the sacrificial substitute. We have dwelt upon this because these two brothers represent the two religious classes that have existed and will continue to exist to the end of time. Here again is revealed the gospel in Genesis, the Abel class recognizing the Redeemer as the sole hope of man. And by New Testament times both the Redeemer's name and His identity are boldly proclaimed by the apostles as man's only hope. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

It may also be observed that Cain's murder of Abel was the first example of the enmity that God declared would exist between the serpent and the seed of the woman—in other words,

² The statement of Cain in Genesis 4:13 is really an inquiry, "Is mine iniquity too great to be forgiven?" So it is with the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, Pargum of Onkelos, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Greek and Latin Fathers. (See *The Companion Bible*, note on Gen. 4:13.)



WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU, ARTIST

The First Death. That of Abel, as the Fruit of Sin Brought Anguish to the Hearts of Our First Parents. But Death Called for Restoration Provided Through Christ.

between Satan and his subjects and Christ and His followers.

2. LARGER INVOLVEMENTS OF SIN, DEATH, AND SALVATION. —So it was that the promise of a Redeemer was immediately followed by the institution of a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of man's sin—a sacrificial confession of faith in the promised Redeemer. This provision was to impress constantly upon fallen man the solemn truth that it was sin that had caused death. Life, that only God could give, was to be taken—for if man had remained obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast.

In time man came clearly to understand that his sin would cause the death of the coming spotless, sinless Lamb of God, man's divine Substitute (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19). Nothing could actually expiate man's sin save the death of God's own Son, who would give Himself a ransom to save the guilty.

Moreover, the coming of the Redeemer would also vindicate the character and veracity of God and His word and will before the universe, and establish the justice and integrity of the government and law of God. Thus Christ said, when He came, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:31, 32).

That act of dying for the salvation of man would not only make the restored Paradise accessible to men but would justify God in dealing with the rebellion of Satan as well as of defiant man. It would reveal the subversive nature of sin and establish the perpetuity of the word and law of God—and thus show to all that the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

This sacrificial rite, established by God Himself, came to have a place in perverted form, it should be added, in most of the ancient religions of mankind. Though mankind had departed far from God, and had lost the true knowledge of Him, yet this one basic principle of forfeiture of life because of sin, and of redemption through a substitute as the only ground of hope, still remained in varying degrees and in distorted forms in most religions, which merely sought to placate their false gods thereby.

II. Unfolding Portrayal to Abraham Included Resurrection

As we have seen, the entire worship system of the patriarchal age centered, in fact, in the rite of sacrifice as typifying the Great Sacrifice that was to come. As such it was an enacted ceremonial prophecy, or type, of the gospel realities to follow. In this divine institution the offerer acknowledged the forfeiture of his own life in the death of the substitutionary victim he offered to God, and placed his hope in the promised Sacrifice to come, when man's Redeemer would give up His own sinless life to redeem sinners from death.

And in it all the shed blood was the essence and foundation of the doctrine of substitution and atonement—for, as ob-

served, "without shedding of blood [in which is the life (Gen. 9:4)] is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

All through patriarchal times the sin offering represented Christ's bearing the believer's sins, taking the sinner's place, and dying in his stead—the sin offerings being both *substitutionary* and *expiatory* (Matt. 26:28; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21). Thus Abraham's "sacrifice" of Isaac was a dramatic portrayal of the great prophesied sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of mankind (Heb. 11:8-10, 17), for Abraham "rejoiced to see my [Christ's] day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Let us scrutinize this historic episode in some detail.

1. ABRAHAM'S TEST OF FAITH IN GOSPEL PROVISION.—Abraham's test of faith with the paralleling submission of Isaac in faith was a conspicuous example of this basic principle in the patriarchal age. Isaac, actually a child of miracle, was portrayed as Abraham's "only son" (Gen. 22:16)—a significant term. But looking beyond the strange command on Mount Moriah, Abraham grasped the implications of the divine word, in "accounting that God was able to raise him [Isaac] up, even from the dead" (Heb. 11:19).

When Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham's response was, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:7, 8). And when Abraham's hand was lifted to slay, it was stayed by the voice calling, "Abraham, Abraham." And the words followed, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad . . . : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, *thine only son* from me" (vs. 11, 12). One can almost hear the pathos in those words, for when God's only Son died on Calvary there was no hand to stay!

Then it was that Abraham saw "a ram caught in a thicket" (v. 13). And taking this *substitute*, he offered it "in the stead of his son." So it was that Abraham gave a new name to the place—"Jehovah-jireh" ("the Lord will see, or, provide, v. 14, margin"). And here on Mount Moriah, God re-

Time
alone



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The Obedience of Abraham and Isaac Was Rewarded by the Provided Substitute Ram Seen in the Nearby Thicket. Christ Died in Our Stead.

newed His covenant. Thus was the gospel preached unto Abraham (Gal. 3:8). That is why Christ said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see ["that he should see," margin] my day; and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56, R.V.). But there is another important angle.

2. PROVISION OF RESURRECTION RECOGNIZED BY PATRIARCHS.—By faith Abraham "offered up Isaac," "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11:17, 19). While the binding and laying of Isaac upon the altar prefigured the sufferings and death of Christ, Isaac's being taken

thence alive clearly signified Christ's resurrection from the dead. With highest propriety, then, Abraham may be said to have witnessed, in figure, the raising of Isaac from the dead. So the principle and provision of the resurrection were known likewise both to Abraham and to Isaac. Indeed, the hopes of all the patriarchs of old in a life to come were founded upon this expectation of a resurrection from the dead.

Thus David spoke of his flesh resting in hope because God would not leave his soul in *she'ól* ("the grave"), nor suffer His "Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10)—and this was in the eleventh century B.C. Later, in the time of the prophets, Isaiah expressly declared: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19).

By the time of Christ's first advent, man's coming resurrection to eternal life was so thoroughly established as a belief among most of the Jews that Martha, in reply to Christ's assurance of the resurrection of Lazarus, responded: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24). So belief in the resurrection had been known from antiquity. And in Daniel 12 there is explicit declaration of the awakening of some of the righteous from among those who "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Dan. 12:2).

Clearly, then, Isaac the son was a type of Christ, "obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:5-8); and Abraham a type of the Father, who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). And the ram was a symbol of substitution—Christ as our offering, in our stead (Heb. 10:5-10), and then the resurrection was prefigured (Heb. 11:17-19).

3. ONLY THE DAWN; NOT YET THE NOONTIDE.—The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is an important witness to the immemorial antiquity of this belief—the patriarchs "all died in faith," looking "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:13, 10). The entire chapter is a declaration of the faith of the fathers in a future life for



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Jacob's Mystic Ladder, Connecting Earth With Heaven, Was a Symbol of Christ, Both God and Man—Our Sole Hope of Heaven and Source of Immortality.



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Abraham, Father of the Faithful, Believed God and Looked for a Coming Redeemer and the Restoration of the Lost Eden and Forfeited Life.

the saints, and in a resurrection from the dead. And in time, after the resurrection of Jesus, the resurrection came to have the central place in the gospel plan of redemption.

But the patriarchs' *expectation* of receiving an everlasting inheritance must be distinguished from their understanding of the precise method. A ray of divine light, as in the dawn, shone upon them. But the opening and unfolding of the noontide floodlight of truth, and the full or detailed explanation of its provisions through the spectrum of the New Testament, were not as yet seen. Christ, in the purpose of God, was both the life and the light of the world from the day of Adam's sin. But the glories of His coming were only gradually perceived by the saints of old. As Peter says:

"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:10-12).

III. Two Ways to Glory—Translation and Resurrection

Gen 5
 The fifth chapter of Genesis, in which the taking away of the antediluvian prophet Enoch (seventh from Adam—Jude 14) is recorded, reads like a funeral hymn. Each strophe ends with the dirge "and he died." But in the seventh recurrence the sequence is interrupted, and the usual refrain is replaced with the significant statement, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:24).

Enoch, who was thus "translated that he should not see death" (Heb. 11:5), became a type of the blessed destiny of the living righteous who, in the last days of earth, are likewise to be translated at the second coming of Christ (1 Thess. 4: 15-17). Enoch's translation was thus a living proof in antediluvian times of the wondrous provision that immortal life with God was still to be the destined portion of the righteous. And Elijah's later translation to heaven similarly, and even more significantly, represented those to be translated at the Second Advent.

On the contrary, the bodily resurrection of Moses was a type of those who will be resurrected from the dead, but who rest in God in the "sleep of death" until the call of the Life-giver (Ps. 13:3). Enoch, Moses, and Elijah were treated as exceptions—in that they were taken to Heaven early in Old Testament times. There is no Biblical hint of deliverance from death except through resurrection or translation, and this will commonly occur at the Second Advent.

The later appearance of the resurrected Moses and the



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CAMERA CLIX

The Resurrected Moses and the Translated Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration Prefigured the Two Ways to Glory — Resurrection and Translation.

translated Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 2), talking to Jesus, made them the forerunners of the two categories. They constituted foregleams of the glory that is to come for the righteous. So there are just two ways to glory, as presented in the Old Testament—(1) bodily translation and (2) rest in God in the death sleep until the resurrection at the call of Christ the Life-giver.

1. ENOCH AND ELIJAH TRANSLATED WITHOUT DYING.— Enoch and Elijah, as just noted, were translated without passing through death. In the time of Enoch the tide of human guilt had reached such heights that destruction through overwhelming divine judgment was decreed. But righteous Enoch, who had walked with God on earth, was taken up through the gates of the Holy City—the first among men to enter there. As the Epistle to the Hebrews specifically puts it, he was “*translated*

that he should not see death; . . . for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5).

He was not permitted to fall under the power of death, and thus his life represents the state of holiness of the living saints who will likewise be "redeemed from the earth" (Rev. 14:3) at the time of Christ's second advent, when gross iniquity will prevail, just as was the case before the Flood. And in this same way the saints of the last days, clad in the righteousness of Christ, will be translated just before the destruction of the world by the final deluge of fire (2 Peter 3:3-13).

2. **MOSES' RESURRECTION: FIRST TO BREAK BONDS OF DEATH.**—But death "reigned from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5:14) upon all who came under its power. Israel's great leader Moses, greatest of all the Old Testament prophets (Deut. 34:10), after viewing the Land of Promise from Mount Nebo and envisioning the future triumph of the faithful, *died and was buried* (vs. 1-6). But Michael³ the Archangel (one of the many names applied to Christ in the Old Testament) called forth the sleeping prophet. Satan was angered and dismayed, for he had claimed him as one of his prize prisoners of the grave.

Christ, however, did not deign to enter into controversy with Satan, not even to remind him that it was he who, through enticing Adam and Eve to sin, had brought universal death upon the human race. Christ simply said, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9), and Satan fled as Moses arose from the dead. This was the first instance of breaking the death power of the grave, and asserting the life-giving supremacy of Christ. Thus assurance was given of final resurrection to all who should "die godly" in Old Testament times. Translation and resurrection are therefore the two ways to glory.

Later, when Christ the Messiah had appeared among men to die in their stead, and soon to break forever the power of

³ See Matthew Henry's *Commentary*, on Dan. 10:10; Clarke's *Commentary*, on Jude 9; J. D. Glasgow, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, on Rev. 12:7; Lange's *Commentary*, on Rev. 12:1-12, *Exegetical and Critical Synoptic View*, p. 238; Calvin's *Commentaries*, on "Daniel," vol. 2, pp. 253, 368, also p. 13.

Satan over the tomb and give assurance of His resurrection power, the two ancient worthies appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses, prototype of the sleeping saints to be raised, was present along with Elijah, who had been translated without passing through death (Matt. 17:3), as an earnest of the living saints destined to be taken to Heaven without tasting death when Christ returns in power and glory (Matt. 24:30, 31). This episode demonstrated visibly both God's *power* to raise the dead and man's capability of life beyond the grave. This the apostle Paul amplifies in his description of that tremendous hour:

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all 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 [the living] shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

"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. 4:16, 17).

IV. Annual Round of Tabernacle Services Typified Gospel Realities

The whole Old Testament principle of sacrifice was further amplified under the ministrations in the sanctuary of old, first in the tabernacle service in the wilderness and then in the Temple that later took its place in the Jewish economy. By the rounds of typical offerings and priestly services the people were taught day by day the central truths relative to the coming death and ministration for the sins of the people of Christ the Messiah.

And once each year, at the close of the round of typical services, their minds were carried forward to the closing events in the great controversy between Christ and Satan and to the final purification of the universe from all sin and sinners. Since Satan was the originator of sin, and man's archtempter—and thus the direct instigator of all the sins that caused the death of the Son of God—justice demands that Satan shall suffer the



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Both in the Patriarchal Age and in the Later Period of the Tabernacle, the Sacrificial Offering Pointed Forward to Christ Who Would Die in Man's Stead.



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The Slaying of the Lamb of Old Symbolized the Coming Lamb of God Who in Actuality Takes Away the Sins of the Repentant and Forgiven Sinner.

final, fateful punishment for the *instigation* and *perpetuation* of sin. That, too, was prefigured in symbol on the Day of Atonement. Christ died vicariously for my part. Satan must also die for his part in all sin.

1. YEARLY ENACTMENT OF PLAN OF REDEMPTION.—The sanctuary service was, in fact, a yearly enacted portrayal and graphic prophecy in type of the whole plan of redemption. All the offerings, of the several kinds, were portrayals foreshadowing in type various aspects of the one all-sufficient and all-embracing and complete and perfect atoning sacrifice for sin by

Christ the Lamb of God on Calvary. And all the functions of all the priests, both common and high priest, in the multiple yearly round were but symbolic of the one all-comprehensive and all-efficacious priesthood and judicial ministry of Christ.

But in the antitypical fulfillment Christ was *both offering and offerer, both victim and priest.* The multiple services of the sanctuary were simply a foreshadowing of the sublime gospel realities, centering in the atoning death, triumphant resurrection and ascension, and priestly mediation in Heaven before the Father, of Christ our Saviour and Priest, our Judge and coming King. And the meaning of all these sanctuary types of old is to be understood and interpreted in the light of the great antitypical realities in Christ. He is both the grand center and the vast circumference of salvation for man.

2. JUSTICE AND MERCY MET IN TYPE AT THE ARK.—The blood of the sin offerings represented the principle of the Substitute accepted in the sinner's stead. The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle. Placing his hand on the victim's head and confessing his sins, he in figure transferred them to the innocent sacrifice. Then the animal was slain by the sinner's own hand, and the blood was placed by the priest on the horns of the altar of burnt offering.

The law of God, enshrined in the ark, was the great rule of righteousness and judgment. And the vindication of that law involved the death of the transgressor. But above the law was the mercy seat, over which the presence of God was manifested in glory, and from which, by virtue of the atoning sacrifice, pardon was granted to the repentant sinner. Thus the work of Christ for our redemption was symbolized by the sanctuary service, where "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10).

3. SIN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, DEATH AND LIFE, PORTRAYED.—The Levitical rites were only symbols, their efficacy depending solely upon the effectual sacrifice of Christ, which they prefigured. But this basic truth Israel, alas, came to forget.

The shed blood of the animal victims was only the emblem of redemption to be effected actually through the blood of Christ shed on Calvary. This truth Israel as a nation failed to grasp when Messiah came. The slaying of the innocent animal, through the shedding of its blood by the sinner, was a symbolic enactment of the offering of a *substitute*, the blood of which had been shed instead of his own, and the life of which had been extinguished instead of his own life. It was God's plan.

Thus the principle was continually emphasized that sin is an offense against God. And the essential righteousness of God requires that sin be punished, and that death, which is the "wages of sin," is the divinely designated punishment. The sinner is unable of his own power to escape the punishment due to his offenses. But God in His grace and mercy pardons the guilty offender by way of the substitution and offering of an expiatory victim.

But, be it noted, the sinner was not to subject the animal to unending torture, but was to put it to death by taking away its life. This was the true representation of death, the requisite punishment for sin—the death threatened to Adam, the one involved in the original transgression, and stressed in every book in the Old Testament.

4. PENAL PUNISHMENT DEATH NOT LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

—In the penal economy of the Mosaic law there was no such punishment as imprisonment for life, much less imprisonment for life under continuous torture. The penalty for the gravest offenses was always and only death. And it is to be remembered that this law of retribution, under the theocracy, was instituted by God Himself. We can draw no other conclusion than that for ancient Israel, capital punishment by death, under the divine as well as human administration, was the supreme penalty set forth in the law.

Indeed, in the entire system of sacrifices, patriarchal and Mosaic, both of which were ordained by God, the substitute victim was never subject to prolonged torture, or imprisoned for life, but was put to death. By this the offerer acknowl-

edged that he had forfeited not merely his liberty or his well-being but his *life*—his very being. The sacrifice was not merely an offering, but the offering of a life in the place of the offerer.

Under the theocracy of Israel the legislative, executive, and judicial powers and processes were all united, and *death* was the penalty for the major violations. But there is not a word about endlessly prolonged suffering of body and soul. We repeat: The penalty of the law was never even life imprisonment, but only and always DEATH—capital punishment, loss of life, cutting off, utter destruction, perishing, being blotted out. That is the testimony of Israel's theocracy.

5. SINNER INCURRED DOOM OF DEATH.—The taking away of the life, dramatically portrayed all through the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, attested that man, refusing to live the intended life of holy obedience to the living God, had justly incurred the doom of death, and that it was divine goodness alone that withheld the stroke of final death from man. Man could hope for a restoration to unending life only through the sacrifice of One who, by His atoning death and resurrection, should thereby abolish death and *bring immortality to light* (2 Tim. 1:10).

Above all, Christ's death showed that a final rejection of the remedy offered still left men liable to the penalty—but now with the added guilt of trampling underfoot the divine provision in the plan of redemption.

Thus understood, those typical sacrifices take on tremendous significance. As one ponders the numberless effusions of blood, it is easy to understand the ancient testimony to the just deserts of sin—"the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Eze. 18:4, 20). It was a continuing dramatic representation to Israel of sin and punishment, remedy and redemption. It portrayed the results following from the fall of man. But with it comes the wondrous corollary, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins . . . , he shall surely live, he shall not die" (v. 21).

6. ENTIRE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM FULFILLED IN CHRIST.—

↘ The Christ-centered character and emphasis of the Mosaic sanctuary service cannot be overstressed. Before leaving this aspect, note six points revealing the gospel in prototype and in essence:

(1) The Passover lamb was a type of *Christ* (Ex. 12:3-14; 1 Cor. 5:7).

(2) The daily, or continual, burnt offering was a type of *Christ* (Ex. 29:39-42; Heb. 9:25, 26).

(3) The sin offering was a type of *Christ* (Lev. 4:32, 33; Isa. 53:6, 7; John 1:29).

(4) The tabernacle itself and its services all constituted a type of the incarnate *Christ* and His redemptive work (Ex. 25:8; 29:43-45; John 1:14; 2:19-21).

(5) All other ceremonial observances were but shadows of the reality, which is *Christ* and His saving work (Col. 2:16, 17; Heb. 10:1).

(6) Finally, the typical system of sacrifices was abolished by the incarnation and death of *Christ* (Matt. 27:50, 51; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:4-9). The types had served their prefatory purpose.

7. CHRIST ACTUALLY AND TRULY DIED IN ATONEMENT.

↘ —These sacrifices all pointed specifically to Christ, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). If the punishment due to our sins is not actual death, then Christ could not have made an atonement for us by His death. Of the fact that He actually died there can be no valid question. And that He died an ignominious and painful death is undeniable. But His agony on the cross was brief compared with the prolonged agony that many others suffered—even the thief on the other cross (John 19:32, 33). It was therefore ↘ Christ’s death, not simply His suffering, that was efficacious unto atonement.

Death is definitely, then, the *forfeiture of life*. In the light of revelation, in this amazing, substitutionary, atoning transaction, the one and only God-man, becoming such through the incarnation, *paid the exact and full penalty designated by law*

that was due to us. He died, actually and truly died, just as any other man dies, and as we must all die—but we without any hope of resurrection, save through Him.

Then, by the almighty power of the Divine Spirit—"being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18)—Christ Jesus rose victorious over the power of the grave, and so became "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25). That is our sole hope.

8. DEATH PENALTY UNDER THE DIVINE LAW.—Since the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), the nature and essence of the death penalty under the divine law is of vital importance in this Old Testament survey. "The law entered, that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20), and that "sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13). This was brought out as a fundamental principle in the Pauline theology. The law of God was not merely a human institution, applying only to Israel. The Jewish organization was a theocracy, a divine economy—the Ruler and moral Governor of the universe becoming the Ruler over Israel.

In attestation of His righteousness He gave them a law—"holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12)—a spiritual law (Rom. 7:14), requiring not only outward obedience but inward purity of motive, and an obedience springing from loyalty to God. It was designed to exhibit the exceeding sinfulness of man and its disastrous penalty upon the sinner. It was indeed the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, or preparation for the gospel.

V. Christ, Prophesied First Fruits, Rose on Precise Day

According to Old Testament type and New Testament fulfillment, Christ was the prophesied first fruits of Old Testament resurrection assurance and provision. Paul declares:

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become *the firstfruits of them that slept*. For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Christ]

came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ *shall all be made alive*. But every man in his own order: *Christ the firstfruits*; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

Speaking before Agrippa, Paul declared what Moses and the prophets predicted—"that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should *rise from the dead*, and should shew light unto the people" (Acts 26:23). Now, this precisely stipulated ceremony of the "firstfruits" was given as a type to Israel, with this clear instruction:

"When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall *bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest* unto the priest: and he shall *wave the sheaf before the Lord*, to be accepted for you" (Lev. 23:10, 11).

1. **FIRST FRUITS A FIXED PART OF ANNUAL SERVICE.**—This ceremony of the first fruits became a fixed part of the annual typical service, prefiguring the antitypical actualities of redemption through Christ, that were to come. Each year the sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest was gathered and waved before the Lord, and was accepted for Israel. They might then freely partake of the grain of the harvest. Now note the unique application of the first fruits to the resurrection.

2. **"EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER."**—There are actually three resurrections involved, with "every man in his own order" (1 Cor. 15:23). Observe the distinctions:

(1) The basic first resurrection was that of the *Man Christ Jesus, the first fruits* (1 Cor. 15:23; Acts 26:23), at His resurrection. This was the essence and certification of those to follow.

(2) Next, "*they that are Christ's* [the righteous] *at his* [Christ's second] *coming*" (1 Cor. 15:23). This is commonly designated the resurrection of the righteous—out from, or from among, all the dead. It is called "*the first resurrection*," and comprises the "blessed and holy" (Rev. 20:5, 6). It is the "*better resurrection*" (Heb. 11:35); the resurrection *unto life* (John 5:29; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17); or resurrection of the *just* (Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15).

Those who partake of it are called "children of God, being the *children of the* [first] *resurrection*" (Luke 20:35, 36). This takes place at the Second Advent.

(3) And finally the "rest of the dead" (Rev. 20:5) come forth—the remainder, or wicked. This is called the resurrection of the *unjust* (Acts 24:15); the "resurrection of *damnation*" (John 5:29), and "to *shame and everlasting contempt*" (Dan. 12:2). This occurs at the *close* of the millennium, whereas that of the righteous comes at the *beginning* of the thousand years (Rev. 20:5, 6). The two are thus in vivid contrast. But they comprise the whole of humanity.

3. FIRST-FRUITS RESURRECTION FULFILLED ON VERY DAY OF TYPE.—Now, it is tremendously impressive to note the exactness of the time of prophesied fulfillment. In the type, the Passover lamb was always slain on the fourteenth day of the first month (Abib; Num. 9:2, 3, 5). It was eaten on the fifteenth, which was the first day of unleavened bread. And on the sixteenth day, the "morrow" after this annual "sabbath" (Lev. 23:11), the first fruits (which had previously been cut) were presented before the Lord. So it was that in the anti-typical reality, Christ, "our passover" (1 Cor. 5:7), died on Friday afternoon, the fourteenth of Abib, in the year of the crucifixion.⁴ He rested in the grave over the Sabbath, the fifteenth. And on the "morrow after the sabbath," that is, on the sixteenth, Christ, the first fruits, arose triumphantly from the tomb and presented Himself before the Father for acceptance—exactly according to prophetic stipulation. (In this particular year the annual typical sabbath coincided with the weekly seventh-day Sabbath. As such it was a "high day.")

Thus it was that the resurrection of Christ, the anti-typical Wave Sheaf, or *First Fruits*, took place on the precise day stipulated in the prophetic type. He was the grand fulfillment. For more than a thousand years after its establishment, that typical ceremony took place annually in Israel. From the

⁴ For detailed study, with diagram, see L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 4, pp. 1245-1247.

14-15th day

newly ripened harvest the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and *waved as a thank offering* before the Lord. And not until the wave sheaf was presented could the sickle be put to the grain for the use of the people.

In the great antitypical reality Christ, as the divine First Fruits of the resurrection, was the great pathfinder, as it were, of the spiritual harvest of the redeemed to be gathered at His second advent by means of the first resurrection. Thus Christ's own resurrection, after the cross, became the inviolable pledge of assured resurrection of the righteous dead at His return. That is its broader significance. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep in Jesus* will God bring with him" (1 Thess. 4:14).⁵

Such is the remarkable assurance of our resurrection based upon the Mosaic type.

⁵ The phrase "bring *with him*" does not, as some contend, imply that when Jesus comes again He will bring back with Him the souls of the saints who have been in Heaven since their death. On the contrary, those who are now silently "asleep" in death and not engaged in unceasing activity in Heaven, must first be raised from the dead, just as Jesus rose, before they can be with their Redeemer.

Furthermore, the Greek word *ago*, for "bring," means to *lead, lead along, or take along*—as a general leads. Thus in Acts 21: The chief captain "commanded him [Paul] to be *carried [ago]* into the castle" (v. 34). In the Emphatic Diaglott, 1 Thessalonians 4:14 reads "lead forth." Hebrews 13:20 reads, "Now the God of peace, that *brought again* from the dead our Lord Jesus," et cetera. So when Christ comes He will raise, or bring again, the dead from their death sleep, and they will thus be led forth to meet their Lord, who comes with all His holy angels.

Eternal Destruction Is Decreed Doom of Wicked

I. Utter Destruction Ultimate Fate of Intractably Wicked

We now come to the final phase of the tragic episode of sin—the ultimate and utter destruction of the unrepentant sinner if he willfully clings to his sin. According to the Inspired Word all such will be destroyed “root” and “branch.” This means Satan and his evil angels, together with all the incorrigibly wicked who have joined in the great rebellion against God and His government and law, and have spurned His proffered redemption and righteousness. Here is a typical passage from the last chapter of the last book of the Old Testament:

“For, behold, the day cometh, that *shall burn as an oven*; and all the proud, yea, and *all that do wickedly, shall be stubble*: and the day that cometh shall *burn them up*, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall *leave them neither root nor branch*” (Mal. 4:1).

The writers of the Old Testament seem to have exhausted the resources of the language at their command—the Hebrew tongue—to affirm the complete destruction of the intractable sinner. The major Hebrew verb roots (such as destroy, perish, consume, cut off, burn up) are literal, and are used to signify the total extinction, or excision, of such animate beings.

Other expressions are figurative—couched in metaphor, simile, symbol, analogy, metonymy, synecdoche, comparison, and allegory. But they are all designed to further enforce this foundational emphasis. These must be noted in some de-



MENTE, AFTER FRANCIS DANBY, A.R.A.

The Ultimate and Utter Destruction of the Wicked Will Forever End the Terrors, Sorrows, and Memories of Sin. Then the Fires Will Go Out.

tail, as we can only determine their real significance by surveying their over-all *Biblical* usage.

1. SCORES OF OLD TESTAMENT VERBS SIGNIFY "DESTROY."—The Old Testament uses some fifty verbs (along with their Greek equivalents in the Septuagint and the New Testament), signifying different aspects of *destruction* when setting forth the ultimate doom of the wicked. Many of them declare absolute cessation of existence. Others point strongly in that direction, and the clear must always explain the obscure. Together they constitute overwhelming testimony. Indeed, no stronger terms are to be found in any language than those employed in both the Old and the New Testament to connote ultimate total extinction of being for the wicked. Note the scope of the terms.

2. IMPOSING ARRAY OF LITERAL ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS.—In order for us to get the over-all picture, here is an imposing list of English equivalents used in translating the Old Testament terms: *Destroy, end, consume, devour, take away, tread down, burn, burn up, cut off, hew down, cut down, break in pieces,*

quench, go out, extinguish, slay, break down, overthrow, cast down, destroy utterly, sink down in a pit, beat down, melt away, die, mortify, put to death, strike, melt, pluck out, fall, dash in pieces, scatter as dust, pass away, trample underfoot, root out, bring to nought. No loopholes are left.

Only God can dissipate the "breath," efface the personality, and destroy the sinful ego, or entity, comprising man. And He has fully and irrevocably declared the fate of the incorrigibly wicked. Such is the witness of the literal depictions.

3. GALAXY OF FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS SUPPORT THE LITERAL.—And here are some of the varied figurative or proverbial expressions that harmonize with, and consistently buttress, the nonfigurative literal declarations concerning the ultimate end of existence for persistent evildoers: They will be as a vessel broken to pieces, as ashes trodden underfoot, as smoke that vanisheth, as chaff carried away by the wind, as tow that is burned, as bundles of dry tares, as thorns and stubble, as vine branches pruned off, as wax that is melted, as the fat of sacrifices—all combustible and all destructible by fire. And all of these expressions, it will be observed, likewise preclude the notion of sufferings infinitely prolonged.

Again, the wicked will pass like the *morning cloud*, like the *early dew*, like a *dream when one awakens*. Other figures in the Scripture symbolism are: the *lost sheep*, threatened with speedy death by hunger and thirst or the wolf's jaws; the *withered tree*, without root or branch; the *garment* that is moth-eaten; the *ax and the fire*, and the *leprosy* that consumes the tissues. Everywhere and always the concept prevails of the *decomposition*, of the *breaking up of the organism* and *final cessation of the existence of being*—*never* that of immortal life in endless suffering.

4. ITERATED AND REITERATED IN KEY CHAPTERS.—A striking but typical example of Old Testament teaching is found in Psalm 37. Here are nine different expressions concentrated in the one psalm, italicized to bring out the intent:

Ps. 37

- Vs. 1, 2—"For they [workers of iniquity] shall soon be *cut down* like the grass."
 9—"Evildoers shall be *cut off*."
 10—"For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*."
 20—"The wicked shall *perish*, . . . *into smoke shall they consume away*."
 22—"They that be cursed of him *shall be cut off*."
 28—"The seed of the wicked shall be *cut off*."
 34—"The wicked are *cut off*."
 36—"He passed away, and, lo, *he was not*: . . . *he could not be found*."
 38—"The transgressors shall be *destroyed together*: the end of the wicked shall be *cut off*."

Or take the eighteenth chapter of Job, with seven declarations:

- Vs. 5—"The *light* of the wicked shall be *put out*."
 6—"His *candle* shall be *put out* with him."
 12—"Destruction shall be ready at his side."
 13—"It [destruction] shall *devour the strength* of his skin."
 16—"His roots shall be *dried up* beneath, and above shall his *branch be cut off*."
 17—"His remembrance shall *perish from the earth*."
 18—"He shall be . . . *chased out of the world*."
 20:9—"The eye . . . shall *see him no more*."

A wide range of individual declarations of similar intent and equal intensity is scattered all the way from Genesis to Malachi.

II. Multiple Terms Signify Complete Destruction of Being

We here list alphabetically for reference some seventy variant expressions denoting the one thought of "destruction," "perishing," "consumption by fire," "turning to ashes," and "cessation of being," as portraying the fate of the wicked. Note the impressive, cumulative array:

Ashes under soles of feet—Mal. 4:3.

Be as though they had not been—Obadiah 16; Job 20:9; Ps. 37:10.

Be no more—Ps. 104:35; Prov. 10:25.

Become as nothing—Isa. 41:11, 12.

Blossom go up as dust—Isa. 5:20-24.

Blot out name forever—Ps. 9:5.

ETERNAL DESTRUCTION IS DECREED DOOM OF WICKED 109

Blot out of existence—Deut. 29:20; Ps. 69:28.

Break in pieces—Job 34:24; Ps. 2:9.

Bring down to pit of destruction—Ps. 55:23.

Burn like tow—Isa. 1:31.

Burn them up—Mal. 4:1.

Burned up as cut thorns—Isa. 33:12.

Candle of wicked put out—Job 21:17.

Cast down to destruction—Ps. 73:18.

Cast down, unable to rise—Ps. 36:12.

Cast off forever—1 Chron. 28:9.

Chaff which wind drives away—Ps. 1:4.

Chased out of world—Job 18:18.

Consume—Ps. 59:13; 104:35; Isa. 29:20.

Consume away into smoke—Ps. 37:20.

Consumed—Job 22:20.

Consumed out of the earth—Ps. 104:35.

Cut down like grass—Ps. 37:2.

Cut off—Ps. 37:9, 22, 28, 34; 94:23; Prov. 2:22; Nahum 1:15.

Cut off remembrance from earth—Ps. 34:16.

Dash in pieces—Ps. 2:9.

Destroy—Ps. 145:20; Prov. 13:13.

Destroyed forever—Ps. 52:5; 92:7.

Destroy utterly—Ex. 22:20; Ps. 21:10.

Devour—Ps. 50:3.

Devour as stubble—Nahum 1:10.

Die—Eze. 18:4, 20.

Dissolved—Ps. 75:3.

Driven away like chaff—Ps. 1:4.

Eaten up like garment—Isa. 51:8.

Fire shall devour them—Ps. 21:9.

Lamp of wicked put out—Prov. 13:9; 24:20.

Leave neither root nor branch—Mal. 4:1.

Light of wicked be put out—Job 18:5.

Melt away as waters—Ps. 58:7.

Melt like wax—Ps. 68:2.

Name put out forever—Ps. 9:5.

Not be—Ps. 37:10; Prov. 12:7.

Overthrown—Prov. 12:7.

Perish—Ps. 37:20; 49:20; Isa. 41:11, 12.
 Perish forever—Job 20:7.
 Pluck thee out—Ps. 52:5.
 Put away like dross—Ps. 119:119.
 Put out light—Job 18:5, 6.
 Put out name forever—Ps. 9:5.
 Put to death—Lev. 27:29.

Quenched as fire of thorns—Ps. 118:12.
 Quenched as tow—Isa. 43:17.

Rain of fire and brimstone—Ps. 11:6.
 Return to dust—Gen. 3:19; Ps. 104:29.
 Root out—Ps. 52:5; Prov. 2:22.
 Roots dried up—Job 18:16.

Scattered—Ps. 92:9.
 See him no more—Job 20:9.
 Shall not be—Ps. 37:10.
 Slay—Ps. 34:21; 62:3; 139:19; Isa. 11:4.
 Stubble . . . taken away by whirlwind—Isa. 40:24.
 Swallow them up—Ps. 21:9.

Tear . . . in pieces—Ps. 50:22.
 Tread down—Ps. 60:12.
 Turned into hell [*she'öl*, grave]—Ps. 9:17.

Utterly consumed—Ps. 37:20 (LXX 72:19).

Whirlwind passeth, wicked no more—Prov. 10:25.
 Wither as green herb—Ps. 37:2.

Such an array is overwhelming. But one conclusion can be drawn.

It is to be particularly noted that all these variant terms are simply an unfolding or expansion of the original penalty threatened in Eden—*death*, or *returning to the dust* (Gen. 2:17; 3:19). They simply indicate the mode of destruction and the results. Summarizing, these multiple terms fall under four general categories. Anglican Vicar R. S. Callander, of Gloucester, England, has accurately analyzed and summarized them as indicating:

(1) *Death by fire, or burning, set forth as the designated*

MODE of final punishment¹ (Ps. 21:9; Mal. 4:1, 3; cf. Rev. 20:14, 15; Matt. 13:40, 42; 25:41, 46).

(2) *Perishing as the RESULT of such punishment* (Ps. 37:28; cf. 2 Peter 2:12; John 3:14, 15).

(3) *Death, or cessation of being, as the END of such punishment* (Eze. 18:4, 20; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8).

(4) *Utter destruction as the permanent EFFECT of such punishment* (Ps. 55:23; 92:7; 145:20; cf. Matt. 7:13; 10:28).

And in support of these conclusions the New Testament confirms, adds to, and gives precision—such as specifying the “second death,” of Revelation 20:6 and 21:8, by destruction in the *lake of fire*.

III. Eternal Torment No Part of Death Penalty

It will be observed that in this vast array of Scripture passages there is uniform testimony as to *utter destruction*—without a single statement implying Eternal Torment for the finally impenitent wicked. And even if a few perplexing texts are found, they could not reasonably be allowed to reverse the preponderant emphasis of Scripture or nullify its overwhelming testimony. The notion of Eternal Torment came out of paganism, as a corollary to the postulate of the universal Innate Immortality of the soul. But that presumption did not penetrate Jewry until about 150 B.C., or begin to infiltrate the Christian church until nearly A.D. 200.²

God's blessings in this life extend to a “*thousand generations*” of those who love Him and keep His commandments,

¹ This may be checked by scanning the following passages from nearly a score of OT books, and a few sample New Testament passages, as showing beyond peradventure the uniform testimony of Scripture to *fire* as God's designated mode of destruction for the wicked: (OT) Gen. 19:24, 25; Ex. 32:10; Lev. 10:2; Num. 11:1; 16:35; Deut. 32:22, 24; 2 Kings 1:12; Ps. 21:9; 97:3; 140:10; Isa. 1:28, 31; 9:18, 19; 10:16-18; 30:33; 33:11, 12; 47:14; 66:15, 16, 24; Jer. 4:4; 21:12; Lam. 2:3, 4; Eze. 15:6, 7; 21:31, 32; 22:21, 22, 31; 28:18; Amos 5:6; Nahum 1:5, 6; Mal. 4:1. (NT) Matt. 3:10, 12; 13:49, 50; 25:41; Luke 17:29, 30; Heb. 6:4-8; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 7; Rev. 20:9, 10, 15. (While some terms are figurative, this in no way modifies the preponderant testimony.) “Our God is a consuming fire” to the wicked (Heb. 12:29; cf. Ex. 24:17; Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Isa. 33:14).

² See Outline Chart A, page 522, and pertinent chapters in Parts III and IV.

while He punishes only to the "third and fourth generation" of those who hate Him (Ex. 20:5, 6; Deut. 7:9). If the punishments of the future life were to go on forever, paralleling the bliss of the righteous, it would logically follow that God would likewise punish to the thousandth generation. But even here there is intimation that the wicked are doomed to ultimate and utter extinction.

1. TORTURE NO PART OF JEWISH SACRIFICIAL RITE.—As previously pointed out, in the Levitical sacrificial offerings the victim in the sin offering stood for the sinner. It typified Christ, atoning vicariously for the guilt of man's sin—Christ bearing our sins and standing in our place and stead. Those who offered the sin offering were neither required nor allowed to inflict prolonged torture upon the sacrificial offering—be it lamb, goat, bullock, or turtle dove—but simply to impose death. In the burnt offerings the animal was already dead before it was burned upon the altar, where it was wholly consumed (Lev. 4-7). The rite, therefore, was not based on extended suffering but on the suppression of the life. In Jewish practice, if the execution was prolonged the sacrifice had to be rejected.

2. TORTURE NO PART OF MOSAIC PENAL CODE.—Likewise in the penal code of the Mosaic theocracy the heaviest punishment prescribed was the imposition of the death of the offender (Lev. 20:2; 24:14-16; Num. 15:33-36; Deut. 17:5; 22:21). Long-continued torture was foreign to Old Testament legislation. The odious practice of torture, so common in ancient pagan civilizations, had no equivalent in the code of Israel. (Crucifixion, it should be noted, was of Roman origin.) In case of stoning, under Israel, care was taken that the first stone cast should be large enough to crush the victim's chest, resulting in death.

Death, not torture, as the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23), is consistently set forth in Scripture. The punishment fitted the crime.

IV. Eternal Destiny Revolves Around Intent of "Life" and "Death"

1. LIFE AND DEATH—KEYS THAT UNLOCK INSPIRED INTENT.—The issues of eternal destiny turn on the intent of Holy Scripture, as seen in the prologue (of Genesis) and in the epilogue (of the Revelation). The terms "life" and "death" are the dual keys that unlock the Biblical intent as to the destiny of man. Everything turns upon these two antithetical expressions.

As mentioned, life and death are ever set forth as opposites, like black and white. For one to say that death is simply another kind or state of life is like insisting that black is only a variation of white. But if death were a certain state of life, it would simply be a continued manifestation of that same life. The usage of Biblical language protests such violence. To *die* is to *cease to live, or exist*, not to suffer on forever, simply away from the presence of God, but to keep on living.

2. PLATONIC PERVERSION OF DEATH AS PERPETUAL LIFE.—When man is under consideration, *life*—in the historical and grammatical sense—refers to his existence as manifested through animation, action, and sensation. *Death*, on the contrary, is the end of that existence, the termination of all action and sensation. But under the Platonic influence, with its notion of the absolute and indefeasible immortality of the human soul, and the consequent flaunting of the total testimony of Scripture, the traditionalist took his stand on the premise that the inherent life of the soul cannot cease.

As a result the *death* of the soul inevitably came to signify its *perpetual life in the midst of sin and suffering—without any possible end*. Ever dying, the soul nevertheless could never die. Death was consequently replaced by pain that is interminable, while *life* was made synonymous merely with holiness and blessedness in that existence. It was a travesty of truth both in word and in intent.

3. INNATE IMMORTALITY POSTULATE REVERSES TRUE EXEGESIS.—But the postulate of the Innate Immortality of all souls involves an inescapably unnatural and arbitrary interpretation of Scripture—a reversal of true exegesis—so that instead of death being the penalty for the unrepentant sinner, with unending life solely for the righteous, eternal life is instead asserted to be the final destiny of both righteous and wicked—only with the one class in bliss and the other in torment. But such a procedure is undeniable eisegesis—a reading into the text of what is not there, and of what is, moreover, fundamentally contrary to the uniform, overwhelming testimony of Scripture.

4. CHRIST'S DEATH, NOT SUFFERINGS, CONSTITUTED ATONING SACRIFICE.—There is often, of course, intense suffering with death—but always ending in destruction. However, it is not the suffering but the destruction that is the ultimate. Suffering precedes it. Thus it was with the death of Christ, if we are to consider this point at the highest level. There is frequent allusion to His “sufferings” in our behalf. But, dreadful as these were, Christ's sufferings alone did not constitute His atoning death. They were only the accompaniments thereof. Death is ceasing to live.

The fundamental point is that Christ did not endure Eternal Torment. He paid the designated penalty due to Adam and the race—which was death. The death of Christ on Calvary, though including fearful mental and bodily suffering, required the extinction of His life. This principle was illustrated back in the case of Old Testament Israel:

“If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord Thy God; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses. . . . Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. . . . And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought” (Deut. 28:58-63).

Thus all suffering terminates in final destruction, and comes to nought. That is the over-all Bible evidence.

5. DESTRUCTION, NOT ETERNAL TORMENT, THE PUNISHMENT.—Man was placed in the Garden of Eden with the explicit warning that “in the day that thou eatest thereof [of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Should he disobey he would be subject to capital punishment—*death*, by forfeiting his life. There is nothing in the language employed that conveys any concept other than utter destruction as punishment for transgression. There is no intimation of a prolonged, much less endless, existence in torment.

Life and death must have appeared as opposites to Adam—the threat of “death” being the opposite of “living forever.”

We must therefore repeat that there was absolutely no Biblical declaration of death as an *endless life in interminable misery* as the penalty for sin.

V. Stock Objections Invoked Collapse Under Scrutiny

3 OT. TEXTS

In both Testaments there are certain stock-objection texts that are always invoked. Three such passages in the Old Testament—Isaiah 33:14; Isaiah 66:24; and Daniel 12:2—are pressed into service by those contending for the Eternal Torment of the wicked.

1. ISAIAH 33:14—CONTENTION COLLAPSES UNDER SCRUTINY.—The first of the three texts reads: “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”

These words are often brought forth by Immortal-Soulists as describing the torments of the lost, and to impress one with the torrid glare of the pitiless prospect of eternal misery. But even a cursory glance at the context will show that the future state is not under discussion in this text. It is simply a portrayal of the insufferable temporal miseries being inflicted upon

Israel by her enemies and by God's threatened retribution. It is an exclamatory expression to the effect that no one can endure such burnings—a strong negative, to indicate that what is doomed to fire cannot continue to exist; that none can dwell with such devouring flames.

The passage has no relation to the fate of the lost, but rather to the desolation of Palestine by the Assyrians. Verses 10-12 describe Sennacherib's invading army, even threatening Jerusalem itself but nevertheless awaiting sudden and utter destruction, as already foretold in chapter 27:4—when the Lord would “go through them” and “burn them together.” And the fulfillment is portrayed in chapter 37:36, when the angel of the Lord “smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they [the Israelites] arose early in the morning, behold, they [the Assyrians] were all dead corpses.” That is a simple statement of historical fact.

According to the ancient custom of the Eastern nations these bodies were to be burned. The effect of this display of divine power was to alarm those who had not trusted in God, and to lead them to exclaim, “Who among us shall dwell with this devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with these everlasting burnings?”

These words have not the remotest reference to future retribution in Gehenna, only to present punishments on earth. They echo the outcries of terrified sinners in Jerusalem who feared that the perpetual conflagrations of war and the devastations of fire and sword by the invader—and God's wrath—would end in their own destruction, for “who can dwell in these perpetual burnings?”³ In verses 10 to 12 of Isaiah 33 the Lord addresses them:

“Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted. . . . Ye shall *conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.* And the people shall be *as the burnings of lime* [fuel for lime-

³ If a further application is desired, it is well to remember that “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). He is the Sun of Righteousness, whose brightness glorifies the saints but is a fire of vengeance that burns up the worthless (Mal. 4:2, 3; Heb. 6:8; Rev. 20:9).

kilns]: *as thorns cut up* [common Palestinian fuel for such] *shall they be burned in the fire.*"

Then the text in question (verse 14) follows immediately. We would simply add that indifference to the sense of Scripture in an attempt to establish a predetermined point is unworthy of hermeneutics and is fatal to sound conclusions. The "fire" of verse 14 is manifestly the same as that of verse 12—the flame of war kindled in Palestine by the Assyrians, and God's predicted retribution. So the first contention collapses.

2. ISAIAH 66:24—CARCASSES, UNDYING WORM, UNQUENCHABLE FIRE.—We next scrutinize Isaiah 66:24: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the *carcasses* of the men that have transgressed against me: for their *worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched*; and they shall be an *abhorring* unto all flesh."

The scene is set in verses 22, 23: "For as the *new heavens and new earth*, which I will make, shall remain before me," and "all flesh" shall come to worship before the Lord. Then follows the declaration of the verse quoted. The "worm" and the "fire" in this passage can only legitimately symbolize the utter destruction of dead and insensible "carcasses," or corpses, as expressly stated. The text does not therefore support the theory of an eternal, conscious suffering of sentient, disembodied souls of the living damned, which have been consigned to an ever-burning hell.

Any attempt to deduce the immortality of the lost from this text must first assume the indestructibility of "carcasses." But an unquenchable fire is not necessarily one that will not ultimately go out. Rather, it is one that must consume and destroy until nothing remains (cf. Jer. 7:20).

The clause, "their worm shall not die," unquestionably signifies that the worms shall not cease to be until their sordid mission has been accomplished. The contention of eternal, conscious, human suffering could be sustained only by taking out the word "die," in the sense of ceasing to live, because only as

so taken, with a negation, could the passage be construed to speak of eternal suffering.

And it is of course obvious that such "worms"⁴ are not endowed with immortality, or with powers of continuous reproduction throughout eternity in a blazing fire. We repeat that a "fire" that never shall be "quenched" does not necessarily mean it must burn forever. Jude, in verse seven, declares that Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth as examples of *eternal fire*. But Peter tells us that they were turned into ashes, "condemned . . . with an overthrow [Gr. *katastrophē*]" (2 Peter 2:6). Thus Jude's "eternal fire" is equivalent to Peter's "ashes." It signifies ultimate extinction.

"Unquenchable fire" is therefore a fire that is destined ultimately to go out, but that cannot be put out until it has consumed all upon which it feeds. It thus denotes inevitable and utter destruction, and the eternal results of such awesome punishment. With this agrees Christ's solemn New Testament declaration that He will *burn up* the chaff with unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43, 45).

The "abhorring" clearly refers to the nauseous spectacle of the putrefying "carcasses." The reference to the "worm" is not to the remorse of a tormented conscience as some contend, but to literal maggots (Heb. *tōla'*), bred in putrid substances (Ex. 16:20; Deut. 28:39; Isa. 14:11). And it is to be noted that *the "worm" is distinct from that upon which it feeds*. The allusion is unmistakably to the ghastly scenes of the ancient Valley of Hinnom, or Tophet, with its flames and its worms—where those permitted to walk over the fields of the slain could see the vast number of the dead and putrefying bodies of their former enemies. And the case in point, in Isaiah's time, was the 185,000 slain of Sennacherib's host.

So it is not the immortal soul but the multitude of the dead who perished that engages the unquenchable fire and

⁴ Allusions to the "worm" that feeds upon the "carcasses," or dead bodies, appear frequently in the Old Testament, and are actually used to exclude all hope of restoration, and to declare that the punishment is eternal and without hope. (See Job 17:14; 19:26; 24:20; Isa. 14:11.)

the insatiable worm. That was the Old Testament type. And in the final, antitypical fulfillment, and the punitive destruction of the wicked, there is depicted the feast for these worms at the "supper of the great God," to which the fowls of heaven are invited (Rev. 19:17, 18).⁵

Rev. 19, 17, 18

3. DEPRIVED OF LIFE, NOT CONSIGNED TO MISERY.—It is further argued that in Mark 9:43-48 Christ quotes the last two clauses of Isaiah 66:24 in proof of the eternal sufferings of the wicked in Gehenna, and thus gives divine support to the contention. But both the premise and the conclusion must be denied. Christ was not uttering words in proof of eternal suffering. Not a syllable did He express to that effect. He was warning the disciples that it is better to enter into *life* halt or maimed rather than having two hands or feet to be cast into the unquenchable fire of Gehenna—for it is better that *one of the members* should *perish* than the *whole body* be cast into Gehenna (Mark 9:43).

In Mark 9, Christ contrasts the *living* and the *perishing*. But the *perishing* of one member, by its being cut off, is to *deprive it of life*, not to consign it to endless misery. It therefore follows that the *perishing* of the whole body likewise results in similar but total destruction. Consequently, the persons whose worm shall not die are those who have been reduced to *peger* (dead corpses). So the second citation, from Isaiah 66:24, obviously does not apply to Eternal Torment.

The ancient fire of Gehenna was not a fire into which living persons were cast, to be kept alive under torture, but one into which corpses were cast to be consumed. It was not fire designed to prey upon *living* beings, but upon the "carcasses" of animals, and the *dead bodies* of malefactors, hence the consistency of associating fire and worm together. What portion of the dead body the fire failed to consume, the worm would seize upon and devour. Even if one were cast alive into such a

Gehenna ✓

⁵ Cf. Isa. 66:15, 16—"Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. . . . And the slain of the Lord shall be many."

fiery place (as the wicked will be cast into the coming Gehenna), his life would soon become extinct, and his lifeless remains would soon be utterly consumed by these agents of destruction. So this contention likewise collapses.

4. DANIEL 12:2—RESURRECTIONS TO LIFE AND TO JUDGMENT.—The third text, often cited, reads: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth [the inspired depiction of death] shall awake [in the resurrection], *some* to everlasting life, and *some* to shame and everlasting contempt [thrusting away].”

The *awakening* of “some” clearly applies to the resurrection of the righteous, destined to eternal life. As has been shown, those doomed to shame and “everlasting contempt” are excluded from eternal life. Their brief awakening is but for the execution of the judgment. The contempt is felt by the righteous survivors after the judgment and destruction of the contemptible have been meted out.

Thus the “everlasting” applies to the righteous, and the “contempt”—or more accurately “abhorrence”—is that of the righteous over the incorrigibly wicked, who perish. This text affords one of the clearer Old Testament foregleams of the twofold resurrection—one group to life, and the other to judgment—expressly stated in the New Testament (Luke 14:14; John 5:28, 29; 1 Cor. 15:23; Rev. 20:4, 5).

Some assert that the everlasting contempt involves the continued conscious existence of those who are the recipients of the contempt referred to. But the epithet “everlasting” is not applied to the word “shame” (“abhorrence,” R.V., margin)—the same Hebrew *dera’ôn* used in Isaiah 66:24 in referring to the corpses of the slain that lie unburied. *Dera’ôn* means “an object of abhorrence.” Hence it is not the subjective consciousness of the guilty, but the objective abhorrence in which their memory is held by others, that is declared to be everlasting (cf. Jer. 20:11, R.V.; 23:40).

5. CONCLUSION: CONTENTIONS OF THREE CITATIONS COL-

LAPSE.—These are the stock Old Testament passages frequently cited in support of the Platonic postulate of the Eternal Torment of the wicked. But such an interpretation is in direct conflict with the prophet's own position and testimony elsewhere. Furthermore, these three texts are declared by many of the most competent Bible scholars to have no relevancy to a supposed unending torment. ✓

Obviously, they are "theologizing hand-downs" from Neoplatonic Christian philosophers of the third and fourth centuries. They came from men steeped in the theory of the universal, Innate Immortality of the soul, and its corresponding corollary, the Eternal Torment of the wicked. They are unworthy of valid Christian exegesis. All three contentions collapse under scrutiny.

Prophetic Witness Concerning the “Last Things”

I. The Two Advents Focal Points of All Prophecy

It has been well said that eschatology is the crown, or capstone, in the edifice of systematic religious thought. It systematizes, in logical sequence and relationship, the revealed facts regarding the prophetically heralded last days, so as to synthesize the textual evidence and resolve seeming contradictions, as well as to systematize and coordinate the vast array of pertinent evidence.

1. MASTER KEY TO MAN'S DESTINY.—True eschatology, or the doctrine of the last things, thereby *becomes the master key that unlocks the problem of the origin, nature, and destiny of man, dealing especially with the climactic finale of human history and destiny*. For our purpose here, *eschatology*¹ may therefore be defined as that subdivision of systematic theology that treats of the last days, or time of the end, preceding and leading up to the actual end of the age, or world, the “great day of the Lord.” It culminates in the Second Advent and resurrection, the final judgment, the future life, and thus the final destiny of all mankind, good and evil—and the final disposition of Satan and sin.

2. ISSUES OF TIME AND ETERNITY.—“Time” may well be termed that portion of eternity marked off for the redemption

¹ In theological parlance, *eschatology* (the doctrine of the last things) is here used in contrast with *anthropology* (the doctrine of the origin and destiny of man), and *soteriology* (the plan of God in reference to the salvation of man).

of a lost race, ruined as we have seen by the tragedy of sin. History traces the transactions of time. And "time" has been compassed again and again in Bible prophecy, portraying the transcendent developments in the carrying out of God's great redemptive provisions of the divine plan of the ages.

The apostle Peter depicts "prophecy" in these words: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). And further: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (v. 19).

3. KEY TO DIVINE MOVEMENTS OF THE AGES.—The two great areas of prophecy as concerns the Redeemer, Peter declares, involved the testifying "beforehand the sufferings of Christ [predictions of the first advent], and the glory that should follow"—prophecies of the Second Advent and the consummation of the plan of redemption (1 Peter 1:10, 11). Therefore the two great focal points of prophecy are the first and second advents—with the latter in glory and majesty at the last day. So the twin and inseparable centers of Bible prophecy are the transcendence of the cross and the triumphant return of the Redeemer.

Indeed, God's plan of redemption cannot be completed apart from the second coming of Christ and the events connected therewith. The Second Advent is tied in with the first as the necessary and complementary part of the same divine provision for the redemption of man. It is the last, or consummating, phase of His original coming in the flesh. The incarnate, crucified, risen, glorified Redeemer will assuredly come again. Thus the unity and coordination of the plan of salvation is disclosed as complete and harmonious.

4. ONLY TRUE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.—Once the transcendent truth of the two coordinate and consecutive advents is grasped, one possesses the key to the divine movements of



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As There Was Life in a Look for the Serpent-smitten Israelites, So There Is Life in the Look of Faith at Christ, Who Was Lifted Up at Calvary for Sin-smitten Humanity.

the ages—past, present, and future. He has the only true philosophy of history, for around these two advents revolve the issues of time and eternity. But the climax of the plan of redemption, with its glorious consummation, is preceded by an unfolding sequence of mighty epochs and events, portrayed step by step in Old Testament prophecy. This relationship of part to part is disclosed through the great outline prophecies of Daniel. But these all terminate in the final phase of the redemptive plan of the ages, as all history moves irresistibly on to the final, transcendent events predicted by many inspired penmen of old.

So the central theme of prophecy all the way from Genesis to Malachi—and on through to the Revelation—is the unfold-

ing story of the redemption of lost man. That is its lofty purpose. From the first whisper of hope in Eden to the last paean of triumph in the Apocalypse, the restoration of the image of God in the soul is the dominant note of inspired revelation. Prophecy presents the full sweep of this glorious plan of redemption. And eschatology deals with the last portion thereof.

II. Outline Prophecies Mark Out Highway of the Centuries

The outline prophecies of the Old Testament are most completely presented by the prophet Daniel. These set forth a continuous sequence of epochs, as well as major events, spanning the centuries from the time of Daniel onward and reaching to the climax of the ages. Interwoven into these outline coverages are the great prophetic time periods—the 70 weeks, the 1260, 1290, 1335, and 2300 year-days—which are concerned with the specific events, epochs, and activities. And these, in combination, constitute the inspired timetable of the centuries.³

1. CONTINUITY, COMPREHENSIVENESS, AND REPETITION.—

The characteristics of Daniel's outline prophecies are continuity, comprehensiveness, and the principle of repetition—as the prophet four times covers the grand outline, repeating for emphasis and amplification, and establishing beyond all question the landmarks mapping out the highway of the centuries. The establishment of the eternal kingdom of God is the terminus in each unfoldment, when all earthly dominions are superseded by the eternal kingdom of God, with the redeemed saints as its citizens forevermore.

These long-range outline prophecies, extending to the end of the age, therefore involve in their closing sections the various aspects of *eschatology*—emphasizing the last things, and specifically the climactic close of the age, involving the Second Advent, resurrection, judgment, establishment

³ For documented evidence see L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 volumes.



RUSSELL HARLAN, ARTIST

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The Metallic Image of a Man, Symbolizing the Sequence of Nations From the Prophet Daniel's Day, Leads on to the Last Days of Destiny at the World's End.



PAUL REMMEY, ARTIST

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The Kingdoms of Man Will Be Shattered by the Stone Symbol of the Kingdom of God, Soon to End the Reign of Sin, Terror, and Death Forever.

of the everlasting kingdom, the future rewards of the righteous, and the final destruction of the wicked. Scrutiny of the terminal sections of Daniel's multiple prophecies is therefore essential to our quest.

2. DESTINY OF WORLD POWERS OF HISTORY PORTRAYED.—

The symbolism of the great metallic image of Daniel 2, recognized as constituting the ABC of all outline prophecy, presents the far-reaching vista of the life span and destiny of the great world powers of history, and lifts the veil on the "deep and secret things" (v. 22)—particularly as to "what shall be in the latter days" (vs. 28, 29).

A huge symbolic colossus of a man, comprised of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay, is succeeded by a mystic stone that smites the image on the feet, grinding the entire image to powder, and becoming a mountain which fills the whole earth. These four consecutive metals symbolically portray the course of world empires until the shattering stone, representing the kingdom of God, ends man's rule and makes way for God's eternal kingdom. It presents the vast sweep of the ages.

3. COURSE OF EMPIRE GIVES WAY TO GOD'S KINGDOM.—Then, paralleling this symbolism of Daniel 2, come the four symbolic beasts in Daniel 7, rising in succession out of the sea of nations—the Babylonian lion, Persian bear, Grecian leopard, and Roman nondescript beast (the same four world powers)—followed by a multiple-kingdom period, in which we now live. Then is to follow the establishment of the kingdom of God.

So the scintillating metal image and pulverizing stone (chap. 2), the wild beasts rising from the sea (chap. 7), and the battling ram and the speeding he-goat clashing in chapter 8, all portray the rise and fall of these great nations of the past, in God's charted course of empire, and their final terminus.

Thus while there is a distinct eschatological emphasis running all through the Old Testament prophets, Daniel not only presents the all-encompassing outline of the major epochs of history but gives the most complete and comprehensive heralding of the "time of the end," leading to the time of the resurrection of the righteous, the establishment of the eternal kingdom of God, and the final destruction of the wicked.

4. NOW LIVING IN "TIME OF END."—The identity of Daniel's four world powers—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome in the grand outline, with Rome, the fourth empire, divided into ten major divisions—is attested by hundreds of leading scholars of all faiths across the centuries. It is significant that there was widespread recognition in the early decades of

the nineteenth century of the fact that mankind has now entered the prophesied "time of the end."³

The evidence is so overwhelming and so well established—attested by men of so many lands and many faiths—that it cannot be brushed off as simply visionary speculation. There has been a fundamental understanding stemming from the prophetic books of the Old and New Testaments, based upon these unmistakable predictions of the prophets of old.

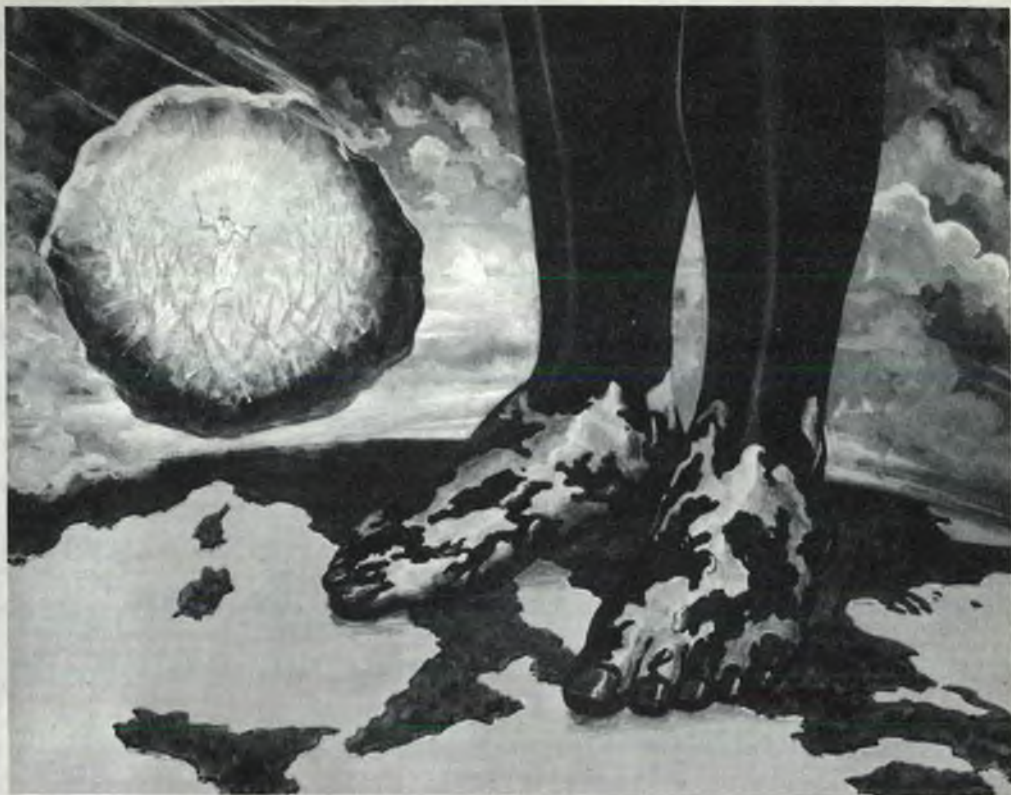
5. SUBLIMITY OF REVELATION SURPASSES HUMAN COMPREHENSION.—The sublimity of the scenes presented by the prophet Daniel surpasses human comprehension. These scenes disclose the plans and purposes of God for ending the tragic innovation of sin, for recognizing and rewarding the characters that will stand throughout eternity, that will put an end to the author of sin, quash forever his lie in Eden, and terminate his deception of the human race.

This divine plan of redemption, as here outlined, exemplifies the wisdom and love of God, and is imperative for the recovery of lost man. It constitutes God's matchless solution for the sin problem. In it justice and mercy meet, and everlasting righteousness and peace are established.

Here again the two advents constitute the essence of the portrayal. For as surely as the incarnation led to the cross, the cross to the tomb, and the empty tomb to the throne, so surely do the ministration before the throne and the judgment scenes lead to Christ's coming again in glory and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

This divine portrayal and provision touches the deepest depths and reaches the highest heights in the whole range of human contemplation of man's sin and God's redemptive rem-

³ Beginning at the outset of the nineteenth century, scores of religious leaders of all faiths—on both sides of the Atlantic and independently of one another—began to declare their common conviction that mankind had entered the fateful "time of the end," or "latter days," or epoch of the last things, repeatedly foretold by Old Testament prophet and New Testament apostle. In the course of the century, that conviction became worldwide among conspicuous students of prophecy in all faiths, until the belief is now widespread that the second coming of Christ, with all its concurrent events and involvements, is drawing near. Full documented discussion appears in L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vols. 3 and 4.



HERBERT RUDEEN, ARTIST

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The Final Event in Human History Is the World-shattering Second Advent With Its Resurrection and Bestowal of Immortality Upon the Righteous.

edy—man's total ruin by sin being met by God's complete salvation in Christ. It constitutes, we repeat, the only true philosophy of history. Indeed, there is nothing more profound in the whole range of human destiny than man's fortune and fate in the hands of divine purpose and power, now on its way to consummation.

As stated, it compasses the whole of time—that portion of eternity marked off for the redemption of a lost race. It constitutes the ultimate in divine revelation and redemptive achievement. God is holy and righteous, and cannot condone sin. Neither can He ignore sin. He must therefore judge sin, and propitiation must be made in order to save man. And that very act of expiation, by Christ, reconciles man to God. Thus lost man is restored to his lost estate.



III. Significance of "Day of the Lord" and Cognate Terms

1. TRANSCENDENT "DAY OF THE LORD."—There are several similar terms of increasing intensity that appear in the writings of the Old Testament prophets. These are: "The day" (Mal. 4:1); "latter day" (Job 19:25); "day of the Lord" (Isa. 2:12; 13:6, 9; Eze. 30:3; Joel 2:11; Amos 5:18; Zech. 14:1); "day of his coming" (Mal. 3:2); "great day of the Lord" (Zeph. 1:14); "great and the terrible day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31); "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5); "day of the Lord's anger" (Zeph. 2:2, 3); "day of the Lord's wrath" (Zeph. 1:18). Job and Daniel both refer to the "latter days" (Job 19:25; Dan. 2:28; 10:14), and Daniel alludes to the coming "time of the end" (Dan. 8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:9),⁴ and to the "time of trouble" (Dan. 12:1). Here are two examples:

"That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land" (Zeph. 1:15-18).

"And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1).

2. SECOND ADVENT TO TERMINATE "LATTER DAYS."—The Old Testament is replete with prophecies of the Second Advent and its attendant events. From Enoch to Malachi, the prophets graphically foretold Christ's coming in power and glory to bring salvation and to execute judgment. The Advent was to all the "hope of all ages," the "desire of all saints." Job expected his Redeemer to stand on the earth at the "latter day." Then follow the holy hopes of others:

⁴ The New Testament writers usually refer to this period as the "latter times" (1 Tim. 4:1), "last days" (2 Tim. 3:1), or equivalent phrases.

"For 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" (Job 19:25-27).

"*Our God shall come*, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:3-5).

"For *he cometh to judge the earth*: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth" (Ps. 96:13).

"Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, *thy salvation cometh*; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isa. 62:11).

"And I will shake all nations, and *the desire of all nations shall come*: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:7).

"And *the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come* to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, *he shall come*, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (Mal. 3:1-3).

And as recorded in the New Testament:

"Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all" ungodly sinners and bring salvation to His saints (Jude 14, 15).

And as Enoch was "translated that he should not see death" (Heb. 11:5; Gen. 5:24), and therefore lives today—in Heaven above with his Creator and Redeemer—it follows that the first preacher, or prophet, of the Second Advent is still living!

3. RESURRECTION IS CLIMACTIC FEATURE OF ADVENT.—A score of varied expressions are used, all meaning the same thing, to indicate bodily resurrection from the grave, living again at the coming and call of the Life-giver. Here are the key words in their various expressions:

"Awake" (Job 14:12).

"Awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15).

"Behold thy face in righteousness" (Ps. 17:15).

"Arise" (Isa. 26:19).

"Raised out of their sleep" (Job 14:12).



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The End of Time Impends—the Climax of the Ages, the End of Sin and Death,
the Bestowal of Life, and Beginning of Eternity.

“In my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:26).

“Remembered” (Job 24:20).

“My change come” (Job 14:14).

“Thy dead men shall live” (Isa. 26:19).

“Together with my dead body shall they arise” (Isa. 26:19).

“Live again” (Job 14:14).

“Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee” (Job 14:15).

"Redeem . . . from the power of the grave" (Ps. 49:15).

"Swallow up death in victory" (Isa. 25:8).

"Put my spirit in you, and ye shall live" (Eze. 37:14).

"They lived, and stood up" (Eze. 37:10).

"Shall awake" (Dan. 12:2).

"Ransom them from the power of the grave" and "redeem them from death" (Hosea 13:14).

4. ETERNAL RESTORATION IS REWARD OF RIGHTEOUS.—

The lost Paradise will be restored and immortality conferred and endless joy and peace will be the reward of the righteous forevermore:

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, *so shall your seed and your name remain*" (Isa. 66:22).

"But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (Dan. 7:18).

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (v. 27).

"Those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. . . . But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:9-11).

"In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

5. WICKED TO RECEIVE PUNITIVE DESTRUCTION.—

Many terms are employed to specify the ultimate and utter destruction of the wicked—involving complete cessation of being, becoming as though they had not been. The leading expressions are:

"Burn them up" (Mal. 4:1).

"Destroyed" (Ps. 37:38); "wicked will he destroy" (Ps. 145:20).

"Consume," "consume away" (Ps. 37:20).

"Perish" (Ps. 37:20; 68:2).

"Cut off" (Ps. 37:22, 34; 94:23).

"Not be" (Ps. 37:10, 36).

"They shall be ashes" (Mal. 4:3).

"Like the chaff . . . the wind carried them away" (Dan. 2:35).

The completeness of the Old Testament picture is impressive. A tremendous portrayal of the plan of God is presented.

IV. Solemn Procession of Prophetic Witnesses Testify

1. PANORAMIC SURVEY OF OLD TESTAMENT WITNESSES.—

As we have already observed, the prophesied "time of the end" (Dan. 8:17, 19), climaxing with the "day of the Lord," is that final segment of time leading up to and terminating with the "end"—the end of the age, or present world order. It therefore leads to and through the time of God's judgments, the close of human probation, the Second Advent and resurrection, the final rewards and punishments, the conferring of the covenanted immortality upon the righteous, and the utter destruction and dissolution of sinners forevermore—and thus the ending of the sin problem.

A score of Old Testament prophets proclaim the coming of the "day of the Lord" with all of its involvements—embracing the eternal overthrow of wickedness and the everlasting establishment of righteousness. There are about eight categories of frequently reiterated events that are stressed:

(1) The coming of the Lord in power and glory, (2) the resurrection of the righteous, (3) the convulsions of nature, (4) the attendant fire and destruction, (5) the resultant desolation, (6) the judgment and punishment for sin, (7) the kingdom of blessedness; and (8) the new heavens and the new earth. This sequence of tremendous events of course involves divine interposition in the affairs of mankind and the physical world.

It may well be noted that many of the characteristic New Testament expressions in this field are drawn directly from the Old Testament. There the coming and the kingdom of Messiah are constantly stressed by Inspiration, far beyond the narrow provincial concepts increasingly envisioned and adopted by the Jews. Jehovah as the righteous Judge and the future kingdom of God for the regenerate of all peoples were constantly portrayed in vivid phrasings.

Let us now take a sweeping survey of the witness of the Old Testament prophets, and note their testimony.

2. CONSTANT SUCCESSION OF ESCHATOLOGICAL GLIMPSES.

—The climax of human history has intrigued men throughout the centuries. But, far more significantly, it has engrossed the thoughts and pens of God's prophets. Eschatological glimpses of the last things appear in constant succession in their inspired writings. Here are some of the many Old Testament declarations:

(1) JOB—tells of the great resurrection day, when the heavens depart, and the Life-giver calls forth the sleeping dead:

"Man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. . . . All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee" (Job 14:12-15).

(2) DAVID—declares that judgment by fire from Heaven has been prepared for sinners: "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Ps. 11:6).

(3) SOLOMON—sets forth the expectation of a judgment at the end of the world:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments. . . . For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13, 14).

(4) DANIEL—gives a multiple testimony. Among other points he forewarns:

"And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:1, 2; cf. Matt. 25:46).

(5) EZEKIEL—passing over Isaiah for the moment, we find that Ezekiel stresses the responsibility of the soul to God, then declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Eze. 18:4). And he emphasizes the resurrection of the body in his graphic portrayal of the vision of the dry bones re clothed with flesh

by God's command, and filled again with the "breath," or "spirit," of life (Eze. 37; especially vs. 5, 6, 14).

(6) HOSEA—holds forth the hope of the future triumph of righteousness in the Messianic kingdom, and affirms the hope of the resurrection: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction" (Hosea 13:14).

(7) JOEL—looks forward to the latter day, when there will be "wonders in the heavens and in the earth" and celestial signs seen "before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel 2:30, 31). Then he assures that a "remnant" will be delivered, and the nations judged, as the Lord shall "roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem" (chap. 3:16). And finally, a *new* Jerusalem will become God's dwelling place forever (chap. 3). He pictures the dark antecedent "day of the Lord" in vivid terms:

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness." "The day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel 2:1, 2, 11).

(8) AMOS—attacks the popular current concept of the day of the Lord as vindicating not merely Israel but righteousness. And he cries, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light" (Amos 5:18). And he likewise warns of celestial signs—how the Lord of hosts "in that day . . . will cause the sun to go down at noon, and . . . will darken the earth in the clear day" (chap. 8:9).

(9) HABAKKUK—foretells the glad time when, with all tribulations past, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

(10) ZEPHANIAH—warns of the approaching "day of the Lord" (Zeph. 1:14): "A day of wrath, a day of trouble and

distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (v. 15).

But when the tempest is past then all the righteous will serve God "with one consent" (chap. 3:8, 9).

(11) **ZECHARIAH**—presents both the gloom and the glory of the "latter days," as well as the Messianic Era, in which the Gentiles are to be converted (Zech. 2:11).

(12) **MALACHI**—tells of the "messenger of the covenant" who will "suddenly come to his temple," but comes in judgment: "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire" (Mal. 3:2).

His final chapter describes graphically "the great and the terrible day of the Lord"—the day that "shall burn as an oven," consuming the wicked like "stubble," reducing them to "ashes," and leaving them "neither root nor branch" (chap. 4:1). Then shall the eternal "Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (v. 2).

These all portray, in various inspired phrasings, the "last things," the events of the "latter days," "time of the end," and "great day of the Lord." That is Old Testament eschatology.

V. Isaiah—Star Witness on Inspiration's Witness Stand

ISAIAH—portrays the glories of the new heavens and the new earth to come. But first he pictures the preceding general judgments. The testimony of these prophetic witnesses has a strikingly similar pattern, climaxing with the Second Advent and the concurrent literal resurrection of the righteous. Here is Isaiah's characteristic portrayal of the dread scenes of desolation, when the Lord returns in judgment: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof" (Isa. 24:1).

Then follows a succession of vivid descriptions: The earth is to be utterly emptied and despoiled—devoured with a curse

—broken down and desolated—the inhabitants gathered together as prisoners in the pit—but visited again after many days (chap. 24). Then comes the time when "he [the Lord] will swallow up death in victory," and all tears will be wiped away. That is when the saints, who have waited for their Lord, are saved (chap. 25).

He sets forth a fervid expectation of resurrection—when "thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise," and "the earth shall cast out the dead" (chap. 26: 19). There is also allusion to the coming of the Lord to punish earth's inhabitants for their iniquity. And at that time "the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (chap. 26:21).

Thus the "indignation of the Lord" upon all nations is disclosed, and they are "utterly destroyed" (chap. 34:2)—because it is "the day of the Lord's vengeance" (v. 8). Then the "streams" and the "land" are turned into "burning pitch," and the "dust thereof into brimstone," as vast destruction reigns (v. 9). The tremendous physical upheavals of the last days are portrayed, but always with hope:

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished" (Isa. 51:6; cf. 2 Peter 3:7-13; Rev. 21:1).

While there is warning that "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," there is assurance that this will be followed by the coming of the glory of the Lord (Isa. 60:1, 2). And there is radiant promise of a "new heavens and a new earth," to supersede the present sin-and-death-pocked earth: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17; cf. Rev. 21; 22).

But the Lord's coming in awesome fiery judgment is again portrayed:

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of

fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isa. 66:15, 16).

Then Isaiah's portrayals end with the glorious assurance to the redeemed: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (v. 22).

But Isaiah, the gospel prophet, likewise gives a tremendous portrayal of Christ's *first* advent, when the Redeemer should come to Zion (Isa. 59:20). Isaiah tells graphically of the mission of Christ's first advent, beginning with His birth (chaps. 7:14; 9:6), then His role as Suffering Servant, and on to His glorious triumph. (Micah even names his birthplace—Micah 5:2.) Tremendous is the detail of Isaiah's inspired portrayal of the anguish of the Redeemer's last hours, as "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14), as He gave His "back to the smiters," and His "cheeks to them that plucked off the hair," and hid not His face from "shame and spitting" (chap. 50:6).

Christ's sufferings and death are all disclosed in chapter 53: "Despised and rejected"—"a man of sorrows"—bearing our griefs—carrying our sorrows—taking the iniquities of us all—"smitten of God, and afflicted"—"wounded for our transgressions"—"bruised for our iniquities"—"brought as a lamb to the slaughter"—"taken from prison and from judgment"—"cut off out of the land of the living"—making His grave with the rich—and His soul made an offering for sin—"numbered with the transgressors"—justifying many—and making intercession for the ransomed transgressors. It is the incomparable prophetic portrayal of the atonement on Calvary.

VI. Major Results Spring From "Day of the Lord"

1. SCENES OF JUDGMENT DOMINATE CLOSING PORTRAYAL.—Let us now summarize. First, scenes of *judgment*, to determine the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, appear in the multiple portrayal:

"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, *that he may judge his people*. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: *for God is judge himself*" (Ps. 50:3-6).

"For he *cometh to judge the earth*: he shall *judge the world* with righteousness, and the people with his truth" (Ps. 96:13).

"For God shall bring every work into *judgment*, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the *judgment was set*, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:9, 10).

2. NEW EARTH BECOMES ETERNAL HOME OF REDEEMED.

—The new heavens and new earth, created anew by God, become the eternal home of the redeemed and now immortalized saints, paralleling the transcendent scenes and provisions of Revelation 21 and 22 and 2 Peter 3:13. This is in the eternal kingdom of glory that shall never end:

"And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, *even the first dominion*; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" (Micah 4:8).

"But the meek shall *inherit the earth*; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:11; cf. Matt. 5:5).

"Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and *he shall exalt thee to inherit the land*: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it" (Ps. 37:34).

"In thy presence is *fulness of joy*; at thy right hand there are *pleasures for evermore*" (Ps. 16:11).

"Behold, the righteous shall be *recompensed in the earth*" (Prov. 11:31).

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." "*The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her*" (Isa. 65:17, 19; cf. Rev. 21:4).

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, *so shall your seed and your name remain*" (Isa. 66:22).

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be *given to the people of the saints of the most High*, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom" (Dan. 7:27).

3. OBLITERATION OF SIN EVENTUATES IN CLEAN UNIVERSE.—The final disposal of sin and its author, together with all who have followed him, will eventuate in a clean universe, in which sin and its dire results will not rise up the second time:

“He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time” (Nahum 1:9).

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isa. 65:17).

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9; cf. Rev. 21:4).

“For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent” (Zeph. 3:9).

4. RESURRECTION AND MILLENNIUM CLARIFIED IN NEW TESTAMENT.—The eschatology of the Old Testament is not, of course, as fully developed or expounded as in the New Testament, which complements and completes the Old. For example, the *two* resurrections (of righteous and wicked, or just and unjust), which take place a thousand years apart, as clearly presented in the Apocalypse (Rev. 20:5, 6), are only implied in the Old Testament. These separated events are sometimes grouped together, and not sharply distinguished as to timing, as in the New. Similarly, the doctrine of the millennium was not as yet clearly developed in the Old Testament, being reserved for the fuller presentation of the Apocalypse.

Nevertheless, the millennium definitely follows the second coming of Christ. According to Daniel, it is *after* the Son of man comes with the clouds of heaven that He is given—

“dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, . . . and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Dan. 7:14, 27).

The millennium is preliminary to this eternal kingdom. According to the psalmist the appearing of the Lord in flaming fire upon His adversaries *prepares the way* for the establish-

ment of His glorious kingdom, as He comes first to judge and then to rule the world with righteousness and the "peoples with equity" (Ps. 98:9; 96:13). The millennium is consequently an interim period.⁵

5. BARREN CONDITION OF EARTH DURING MILLENNIUM.—

The Old Testament gives flash pictures of the chaotic condition of the earth during the millennial period.⁶ But contrary to common expectation the saints spend the millennium in Heaven with Christ, with whom they ascend at His second advent (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51, 52), returning to this earth at its close.⁷ The condition of the earth during this period is one of desolation and ruin, being inhabited only by Satan and his evil minions (Rev. 20:1-3, 7). This is strikingly portrayed in the Old Testament. Then at its close the earth will for a time become the scene of the complete destruction of all evil beings in the Gehennan lake of fire (Rev. 20:9, 10). Old Testament intimations of the devastation are:

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end" (Jer. 4:23-27).

"The Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. . . . And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground" (chap. 25:31-33).

⁵ The clear distinction of the New Testament as to the temporary disposition of the living wicked, at Christ's second advent, is not brought out clearly in the Old Testament. But at Christ's second coming the living wicked are cut off, slain by the brightness of His coming—thus bringing about the *first death* of all remaining living sinners (as is the lot of all men), except the living righteous who are translated and immortalized without experiencing death (1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17).

But the wicked who are slain by the brightness of the Second Advent will come up in the "second" resurrection, at the close of the millennial thousand years (Rev. 20:5), for final judgment—and then utter and final destruction through the second death.

⁶ Fuller portrayal of New Testament eschatology appears in connection with the New Testament presentation. See pp. 388-418.

⁷ See L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 4.

"The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they 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 visited" (Isa. 24:19-22).

But this will pass, and the glories of the eternal kingdom of the saints continue on forever.

As might be assumed, the Old Testament eschatology is simple, logical, and majestic. It is without a single element degrading to the highest concepts of Deity and the divine philosophy of history, and with nothing to revolt the moral senses—nothing of the weird extravagances replete in pagan speculation and myth. It deals with the glorious destiny of the righteous and the irremediable doom of the wicked at the end of the age. That is the evidence of eschatology.

Technical Terms and Usages Preclude Innate Immortality

An Examination of *Nephesh*, *Neshamah*, and *Rûach*

This chapter, and the one to follow, will take on more of a technical turn than has been our wont. But somewhere along the way we must pause to examine more critically the Old Testament terms that we have occasionally touched upon. And this is obviously the place. Some may not be too keenly interested in this semantic angle, but such a scrutiny is essential to a clear understanding of the ground we are traversing. Such a follow-through will more than repay the effort required to grasp the facts involved.

I. Must Understand Key Old Testament Terms Through Usage

Words represent thoughts, ideas. When employed to portray what can easily be seen—such as tangible and perceptible objects—there is far less likelihood of misunderstanding than when used to depict invisible things or abstract ideas. Moreover, the difficulty is inevitably increased when such terms have to be translated from the idioms of one language into the phrasings of another. And this impediment is intensified when rendering from an ancient tongue into a modern language. That is because of dissimilarity of thought, habit, customs, and forms of expression.

Furthermore, the presence of any parables, metaphors, and other figures of speech compound the difficulties. Therefore the task of transferring the meaning with precision is not

an easy one. Also, as is candidly admitted, the theological viewpoint of the translator has often had a definite bearing on the translation. But to these challenges we must now turn.

There are five Old Testament Hebrew *key words* that we must survey in order to determine their true import. And this must be gained through a *comprehensive tracing of their Biblical usage*. This point cannot be overstressed. The reason for this procedure will become increasingly apparent as we continue. These terms are (1) *nephesh* (soul), (2) *rûach* (spirit), (3) *neshamah* (breath), (4) *she'ól* (the grave) and (5) *Gē Hinnom*, or *gehenna* (devouring fire)—with their similarities and comparisons, contrasts and relationships.

II. Meaning of *Nephesh* in the Hebrew of the Old Testament

The word "soul" in the K.J.V. of the English Bible is translated from the Hebrew word *nephesh* in all but two cases. Since the word "soul" has more than one meaning in English, it is important to inquire what the word *nephesh* really means, if we are to understand the teaching of the Bible correctly.

1. "NEPHEŠH" HAS SEVERAL COMMON MEANINGS.—The Hebrew word *nephesh*, like the English word "soul," has more than one meaning, some being not synonymous with the English meanings of "soul."

Koehler and Baumgartner in their lexicon give the following meanings for *nephesh*:

1. Throat.
2. Breath, the breathing substance, making man and animal living beings; the soul (strictly distinct from the Greek notion of soul), the seat of which is in the blood.
3. Living being.
4. Soul as equal to living being, individual, person.
5. Breath, soul, personality.
6. Breath as equal to life.
7. Breath as equal to soul as the seat of moods, emotions, and passions.¹

¹ *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., vol. 2, pp. 626, 627.

Quite parallel with this is the general classification of the various usages of *nephesh* adopted by Bullinger in his lexicon:

- (1) "CREATURE"—"beast," "thing."
- (2) "PERSON"—"man," "men," "him," "me," yourselves," "himself," "we," "he," "myself," "her," "thee," "herself," "thysself," "themselves," "dead," "body," "one," "any," "they," "own," "fellow," "deadly," "mortally," "soul."
- (3) "LIFE" and "LIVES"—"ghost," "breath."
- (4) "DESIRE"—"mind," "heart," "lust," "pleasure," "discontented," "will," "greedy," "hearty," "appetite."²

2. A GENERAL DEFINITION OF "NEPHEsh."—With this much before us, perhaps it is appropriate to attempt a definition of *nephesh*. As a start, at least, we can quote a modern book that is the combined work of many scholars "with a thorough knowledge of modern scholarship and theology," to quote the jacket-flap description of the book. Here is the definition:

"SOUL (*nephesh*) means the living being. We might render it 'person' or 'personality,' so long as we remember that in Heb. thought even an animal is a *nephesh*. In passages of dignified or poetic diction the word is used instead of the personal pronoun (my soul—I or me); or to give a reflexive sense (his soul—himself, etc.). Roughly speaking, it means mind as distinct from matter (to quote the terminology of a once familiar dualism), but always includes more than mind in the limited sense of the reasoning faculty. It includes feelings, interest, and inclination; cf. Jer. 15:1."³

3. BASIC IDEA THAT OF INDIVIDUAL HIMSELF.—*Nephesh* comes from the root *naphash*, a verb used three times in the Old Testament (Ex. 23:12; 31:17; 2 Sam. 16:14), in each case with the meaning "to revive oneself" or "to refresh oneself." The verb seems to go back to the basic meaning of breathing, and in the three times it is used the ordinary English reader might be tempted to translate it colloquially as "catch one's breath" or "take a breather," as after some extreme physical exertion.

Nephesh as meaning the individual himself, is best illustrated by the portrayal of man's creation. As translated from

² E. W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance*, art. "Soul," p. 721.

³ *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, Alan Richardson, ed., art. "Mind, Heart," p. 144.

the Hebrew in the R.S.V., it reads: "The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). Since each person is a distinct unit of life, the uniqueness of individuality seems to be the idea emphasized in the Hebrew word *nephesh*. And since the obvious evidence of life is breath and breathing, it is easy to understand how *nephesh* is used of man as a living being. Thus the R.S.V. translation is an accurate rendering of the Hebrew word.

Nephesh is also used of animals, and is appropriately rendered "creature" in both the K.J.V. and R.S.V. Since animals breathe as evidence of life, the Hebrew use of the word here seems appropriate. As a matter of fact, animals are called *nephesh chayah* ("living creatures," K.J.V.) in Genesis 1.

The basic idea that *nephesh* is the individual himself, rather than merely a constituent part of the individual, seems to underlie the various usages of *nephesh*. From this basic idea springs the idiomatic use of *nephesh* for the personal pronoun—"my soul" for "I" and "me"; "thy soul" for "you," et cetera, to use the common English translations in the Bible.

The majority of the occurrences of *nephesh* may be properly translated by "person," "individual," "life," or by the appropriate personal pronoun.

There are also a substantial number of places in the Bible where *nephesh* applies to the inner being, if by this term we will understand *nephesh* as the seat of mind, heart, emotions, will, et cetera.

III. *Nephesh* as Translated in the English Versions

I. ENGLISH TRANSLATION REVEALS SIGNIFICANT FACTS.—It seems proper to ask at this point whether the English versions really convey to the common English reader the true meaning of *nephesh*. A survey will reveal some interesting facts.

One interesting and useful analysis is to be found in *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 13. The following facts and figures are taken from it:

Nephesh occurs in the Old Testament 754 times. In the K.J.V. and the R.V. it is translated "soul" 472 times, and by 44 different words in 282 other occurrences.

Nephesh is used of the lower animals only—in 22 instances.

Nephesh is used of lower animals and man—7 times. (The first usage of *nephesh* is Genesis 1:20.)

Nephesh is used of man as an individual—53 times.

Nephesh is used of man as exercising certain powers or performing certain acts—96 times.

Nephesh is used of man as possessing animal appetites and passions—22 times.

Nephesh is used of man as exercising mental faculties and manifesting feelings, affections, and passions—231 times in 20 different ways.

Nephesh is used of man "cut off" by God, and being slain or killed—in 54 passages.

Nephesh is used of man as mortal, subject to death, but from which he can be delivered—in 243 passages.

Nephesh is used of man as actually dead—in 13 passages.

Finally, *nephesh* is used of man (all rendered "soul") as going (1) to *she'ol*, (2) to the "grave," (3) to "hell," (4) to the "pit"—hence a grave, (5) a "deep pit," and (6) into "silence."⁴

Another summary presents the facts in a slightly different way.

In the K.J.V. the Hebrew word *nephesh* is translated as follows:

471 times *soul* (every text in the Old Testament where *soul* is used except two, Job 30:15 and Isa. 57:16).

118 times *life* (*life's*, *lives*).

29 times *person*.

15 times *mind*.

15 times *heart*.

9 times *creature*.

7 times *body*.

5 times *dead*.

4 times *man*.

3 times *me*.

3 times *beast*.

2 times *ghost*.

1 time *fish*.

Nephesh is also translated one or more times as *we*, *he*, *thee*, *they*, *her*,

⁴ Based on [Bullinger] *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 13, pp. 19-21. Complete references for each classification and use appear on these pages, which are thus invaluable for reference or study.

herself, him (and other forms of the personal pronoun), and as *will, appetite, lust, thing, breath, etc.*⁵

One thing is abundantly clear from this analysis. The Hebrew word *nephesh* was used in a variety of contexts with a variety of meanings. This is common in a language that is as word poor as Hebrew. To present the correct meaning it is necessary to use many different English words, depending for guidance on the context.

2. INTERESTING VARIATIONS IN R.S.V.—Let us now turn to the Revised Standard Version, and make some comparisons. At the time of this writing the R.S.V. is the latest group-produced English translation of the complete Old Testament. Others are in preparation, and may reveal additional facts for our quest. A check of the computer-produced Concordance of the Revised Standard Version reveals that the words *soul* and *souls* are used 200 times in the Old Testament. A cross-check with the Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, which lists every text in which *nephesh* occurs, with the English translation in the K.J.V., reveals that only 190 times is *nephesh* translated *soul* in the R.S.V.

This is interesting, for it reveals that the translators were aware of the difficulties presented by the word *soul* and have used the other English meanings of *nephesh* in 281 more cases than the K.J.V. In the R.S.V. many of the uses of *soul* for *nephesh* refer to the mind, will, emotions, desires. In a few cases *soul* is retained where *life* or *person* would be appropriate.

3. PROBLEMS CONFRONT THE TRANSLATORS.—One text in particular is worthy of mention because it is often used by those who believe in an immortal soul that can separate from the body. In the R.S.V., Genesis 35:18 reads: "As her soul was departing (for she died), she called his name Benoni." It would appear that here the revisers did not follow the principles they had been using in the other texts. *Nephesh* could very well

⁵ These figures are based on a comparison of The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, Young's Analytical Concordance, and Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. There are probably minor errors in these books, so the figures vary slightly.

have been translated *life*, since the text goes on to explain that she died.

Several modern translators have recognized this, for they translate this verse in harmony with Hebrew usage to give the correct English meaning.

Berkeley: "With her last breath—for she expired— . . ."

Fenton: "But she breathing out her life—for she was dying— . . ."

Moffatt: "As her life went from her (for she died) . . ."

Knox: ". . . her life was ebbing away in her pangs . . ."

Quite parallel to this text is 1 Kings 17:21, 22:

"And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."

This child was dead, for in verse 17 it is said, "His sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him." He had stopped breathing.

Here the R.S.V. continues the use of the word "soul" from the K.J.V., but again in apparent violation of its principles in other texts. Several modern translations follow the Hebrew consistently:

Moffatt: ". . . the child's life came back and he revived."

Knox: ". . . the boy's life returned to him, and he revived."

Berkeley: ". . . the life of the child returned to him, and he lived again."

Smith-Goodspeed: ". . . the life of the child came back to him again; so that he lived."

Rotherham: ". . . the life of the boy came again within him and he lived."

It should be added that in the new Jewish Publication Society translation, of which only the Pentateuch is available at present, the translators have designedly omitted the English word *soul* altogether, because in their opinion it does not correctly represent the Hebrew meaning in any text.

4. THREE CLEAR CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING "NEPESH."—

It is now possible to draw some definite conclusions about *nepesh*.

(1) "*Nephesh*" is not an independent entity—something that is separate, or separable, from the individual himself; something put into one when he is brought into being, and that lives on after he is dead, a sort of double, another self. There are not two personalities in man. Man is an integer, a single personality, a unit.

(2) "*Nephesh*" does not denote something peculiar to man alone, distinguishing him from the animals beneath him in the scale of being. There is assuredly a radical difference, a fixed gulf, between the lowest type of man and the very highest order of brute or beast. But *nephesh* is not the differentiating factor, for the term *nephesh* is applied to lower animals as well as man.

(3) "*Nephesh*" definitely does not designate something in man that is immortal and indestructible.

If *nephesh* does not denote a separate entity that may survive death and separate from the body, is it possible that the word "spirit" can carry such a connotation? The English word "spirit" is often the translation of the Hebrew word *rûach*. So let us study this word to discover its real meaning.

IV. *Rûach* and *Neshamah* Have a Variety of Meanings

1. CONTEXT MUST INDICATE BEST TRANSLATION.—The Hebrew word *rûach* occurs some 380 times in the Old Testament. In the majority of cases (some 360 occurrences) it is translated by three English words—"wind," "breath," and "spirit." Thus the same word is used to carry several different meanings, and the context must indicate the English word that best translates the Hebrew meaning.

In the case of the translation "spirit," the word has several different applications. It is used 76 times in the sense of vitality, courage, temper, or anger. It is used to describe the living principle in man and animals 25 times; as the seat of the emotions 3 times, mind 9 times; as will, volition, or heart, 3 times; and as moral character 16 times. As applied to God, *rûach*, "spirit,"

is used some 90 times.⁶ The word is also used of angels, both good and bad. Since God and the angels are usually invisible to human sight, they may be considered spirit beings, spirits, and are so spoken of in the Bible.

Since breath, wind, moral character, vitality, principle of life, and spirit beings are all invisible, the underlying idea of *rûach* seems to suggest an invisible force, power, or being, which acts to produce visible results.

We are dealing with man and his nature, and we may therefore properly ignore all the uses of *rûach* (spirit) that refer to God and angels. We are interested in breath as evidence of life, and in the principle of life with which God has endowed man.

2. "NESHAMAH" AND "RÛACH" IN POETIC PARALLELISM.—In Hebrew there is an approximating synonym for *rûach* in the word *neshamah*. In fact, it is this word that is used in the record of the creation of man. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath [*neshamah*] of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). *Neshamah* is not a common word, for it appears only 24 times in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. It is translated 17 times as breath; 3 times blast; 2 times spirit; once souls; and once inspiration. It is used with *rûach* in two compound expressions:

"breath [*neshamah*] of the spirit [*rûach*] of life" (Gen. 7:22, margin).

"blast [*neshamah*] of the breath [*rûach*] of his nostrils" (2 Sam. 22:16; Ps. 18:15, with "thy" in place of "his").

Neshamah and *rûach* are also used in poetic parallelism in a number of verses:

"By the blast [*neshamah*] of God they perish, and by the breath [*rûach*] of his nostrils are they consumed" (Job 4:9).

"All the while my breath [*neshamah*] is in me, and the spirit [*rûach*] of God is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3).

"But there is a spirit [*rûach*] in man: and the inspiration [*neshamah*]

⁶ These figures are based on The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance and Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. There may be minor differences in the count in different concordances, so no claim is here made for absolute accuracy. But the exact number of times a word is used or translated a given way is not of prime significance to our quest.

of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). "But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand" R.S.V.

"The spirit of God [*ruach*] hath made me, and the breath [*neshamah*] of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

"If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit [*ruach*] and his breath [*neshamah*]; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again into dust" (Job 34:14, 15).

"He . . . giveth breath [*neshamah*] unto the people upon it, and spirit [*ruach*] to them that walk therein" (Isa. 42:5).

3. THE LIFE PRINCIPLE THAT GOD IMPARTS.—Consider Job 33:4, before cited, for a moment. The "spirit of God" is obviously identical with the "breath of the Almighty." And "the breath of the Almighty" is the source of the "breath of life" (or "breath [that is] life")—as in Genesis 2:7—which God "breathed" into man's "nostrils," thereby causing the inanimate Adam to become a "living soul [being]."

When *neshamah* and/or *ruach* are used in this sense they refer to the life principle which God imparts to each new individual on this earth. It is equally clear that the same life principle is given to the animals also. In the announcement of the Flood to Noah, God said, "Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven" (Gen. 6:17). In the description of the flood catastrophe, in fulfillment of this threat, it is recorded, "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died" (Gen. 7:21, 22).

Parenthetically we should say right here that the "breath of life" common to all breathing creatures does not degrade man to the level of a beast or elevate a beast to the level of a man. God has organized the various creatures of His hand with different qualities and natures. Just as the breath of life does not make a lion like a rabbit, neither does it make a man like a beast. Man made in the image of God is far removed from even the most intelligent animal.

4. "RŪACH" HAS NO SEPARATE CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE.—There is nothing in the Old Testament that even hints that *rûach* as the life principle has a separate conscious existence, that it is the man himself as distinct from the body. It is given to man when he comes into existence, and is withdrawn, or surrendered, when he dies. It is a gift from God, and in one sense always belongs to Him, though man may call it his own while he lives. The preacher in Ecclesiastes 8:8 depicts the helplessness of man when God withdraws the principle of life—his breath: "There is no man that hath power over the spirit [*rûach*] to retain the spirit [*rûach*]; neither hath he power in the day of death."

No, man does not have an undying spirit that continues in conscious existence in another sphere.

There is one more text in which *rûach* appears, translated "spirits," which may trouble some. It is Numbers 16:22, with the same expression occurring again in chapter 27:16. It reads: "And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits [*rûach*] of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" The new Jewish Publication Society Torah renders this as "O God, Source of the breath of all flesh." This would appear to be a better English rendering of the Hebrew meaning, and clears up any difficulty the text might seem to present.

V. Relation of "Spirit" or "Breath" to Life and Death

1. "BREATH OF LIFE" AND "SPIRIT OF GOD" THE CAUSE OF LIFE.—The "breath of life," or "spirit," which brought life originally to man, is expressly declared to have been in-breathed by God. The patriarch Job in characteristic Hebrew parallelism, in referring back to the creation of man, utters these impressive words: "The spirit [*rûach*] of God hath made me, and the breath [*neshamah*] of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

And in speaking of man's death, Job states that it is

brought about by the reversal of the creation process—God gathering back to Himself His “spirit [*rúach*] and his breath [*neshamah*]” (Job 34:14), which He originally inbreathed, or infused, into man. Hence the spirit that God takes back from man at death is God's own vitalizing spirit, or breath, imparted to man, and then returning to its originating Source. This appears also in Ecclesiastes: “Then shall the *dust* [by metonymy, the body] return to the earth as it was: and the spirit [*rúach*; not *nephesh*, soul] shall return unto God who gave it” (chap. 12:7).

2. SPIRIT DISTINCT FROM LIFE IT PRODUCES.—In death man's *rúach* (spirit) goes back to God, from whom it came when man was formed. While it is the presence of the spirit, or breath, of God that *bestows* life on man, it is to be particularly noted that God's “spirit,” or “breath” (Job 33:4), is *distinct from the life it has brought into being*—just as cause is different from *effect*.

This differentiation is highly important. If the *life* of man were identical with the *spirit* that produced it, it would possess all the essential attributes of the spirit. But this is safeguarded in the Scripture account, which describes the spirit as the *cause* of life, but distinct and distinguishable from it. Thus the *effect* may perish, but the cause does not perish. The life of man may disappear and become extinct, while the spirit, or breath, from the Almighty does not. It simply returns to Him from whom it came.

Man *has* the breath, or spirit, of God within him. But the spirit may be withdrawn, since it is only a loan from God for the duration of man's lifetime. Job significantly describes life as “all the while my breath [*neshamah*] is in me, and the spirit [*rúach*] of God is in my nostrils” (Job 27:3). Job knew that his spirit, or breath, was not his own, with an independent and innate right to keep it, but was the spirit, or breath, *of God* in his nostrils—subject to withdrawal at his Maker's will. Job recognized himself as intrinsically but “dust” (Job 10:9; 34:15).

3. RESTORATION OF SPIRIT AT RESURRECTION.—As the entrance of the spirit into man originally gave him life, so in the same way the restoration of the spirit, at the resurrection, renews his life. This is foreshown by Ezekiel's vision of the valley of the dry bones—then “very dry” (Eze. 37:2) and entirely lifeless, having once had life but now with “no breath [spirit, *rûach*] in them” (v. 8). And then through the action of the figurative “WIND” [breath, or spirit, *rûach*] life was restored by God's causing His spirit, or breath, to enter into them again. Thus:

“Behold, I will cause breath [spirit, *rûach*] to enter into you [the dry bones], and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath [spirit, *rûach*] in you, and ye shall live.” “And shall put my spirit [*rûach*] in you, and ye shall live” (Eze. 37:5, 6, 14).

The life that was relinquished when the spirit left the body is thus renewed. And it was this renewal, or restoration of the spirit, or breath—the breath of God that caused life—that was the hope and the promise of a future life for the Old Testament worthies. When they knew they were dying, and were soon to sink back into their original earth, they commended their spirits into the safekeeping of God. Thus the psalmist David, upon the prospect of death, said: “Into thine hand I commit my spirit [*rûach*]: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. . . . I trust in the Lord” (Ps. 31:5, 6).

He made the same committal that Christ later made (Luke 23:46). It was because he had been redeemed that David was able to commend his spirit with confidence into the hands of God. Reiterating then: God gave man his “spirit” at creation. But man forfeited his right to the causative spirit, and in consequence it is rendered back to God at (the first) death, going back to Him to whom it belongs.

And while the spirit is rendered back to God as a forfeit because of the original sin, its restoration is pledged by covenant through Christ. It is the believer's in promise—a promise that will not be broken, for it is “impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18). It is kept safe for him. The separation is for the

time when the sleeper lies silently in the dust of gravedom, which passage of time will seem as but the twinkling of an eye.

VI. Fundamental Distinction Between Man and Beast

1. IMMORTALITY NOT CONFERRED BY INBREATHED "BREATH."—We would once more stress the fact that there is no justifiable basis for the frequent assertion that the inbreathing of the "breath of life" into man's nostrils made the resultant "*living soul* [*nephesh chayah*]" immortal. Man is not intrinsically the breath of life. He simply *has* the breath of life.

Adam had life through the "breath of life," or "spirit of God," that was inbreathed, infused, or inspired into him at creation (Gen. 2:7). This principle and provision of life came to man from God, the sole origin of life, and at death it goes back to God, who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). To die is to expire, and to expire is to emit the last breath.

Death is therefore the separation of the "breath of life" from the body. Man's present physical life, as with all the animal creation, is dependent upon the *breath*. When that is gone, both man *and* beast die. In *that* respect man has no pre-eminence over the beast (Eccl. 3:19). And this is irrespective of whether good or evil. Such is God's universal law.

2. TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM BRUTE CREATION.—But, in the sight of God there is a vast difference between the nature and character and value of the respective lives of man and beast. Man was expressly made in the "image" of God (Gen. 1:26, 27; 9:6; cf. 1 Cor. 11:7; 15:49); the beast was not.

Furthermore, man's power of *speech*, his *moral nature*, his distinctive capability for religion and worship, and his capability of *constant progression and fellowship with God* are totally different from that of the brute creation, which ever remains at the same level of intelligence, and does not have fellowship with God. Man is a "son of God" (Luke 3:38); the beast is not.

In addition, a fundamental difference was established by God in the *relationships and destiny* of man and beast. Thus man was given dominion over the lower animal creation (Gen. 1:26); never the reverse. And while both man and beast return to dust, the brute simply ceases to be thereafter, whereas man sleeps under the watchcare of God until the resurrection. According to the Word, man's "spirit," or "breath," goes back to God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7; cf. Num. 27:16; Job 12:10; 34:14, 15; Ps. 104:29, 30; Isa. 42:5; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9), and is hid with Christ in God awaiting the glad reunion of spirit, or breath, and body at the final resurrection day.

3. AT DEATH BEAST CEASES TO BE.—Such are the fundamental distinctions between man and beast. They are as far apart as the poles, and were so designed, created, and kept by God. At death the beast permanently ceases to be, has no awakening, no future life. That is its end. But redeemed and regenerated man will be called forth from his sleep by Christ the Life-giver, to a life that measures with the life of God, and in eternal communion thereafter with God.

Let none say, then, that because both have life and breath from God, man has no fundamental pre-eminence over the beast. There is no pre-eminence *in this*—that both die, or cease to live. They both expire. *But there the similarity ends.* Upon man alone will be conferred the gift of immortality, to be bestowed at the Second Advent and its concurrent resurrection. Thus man is indeed the crown of creation, made in the "image of God" (Gen. 5:1; Acts 17:29; 1 Cor. 11:7).

Weak Arguments Formulate Unworthy Platform

Two other vital Hebrew terms must be considered ere we turn to certain favorite Old Testament problem texts constantly invoked by Immortal-Soulists in seeking to sustain their view of the persisting consciousness of disembodied spirits, or souls, after death and of the Eternal Torment of the incorrigibly wicked. We will then bring this survey of the Old Testament on the nature and destiny of man to a close. So we now turn, first to *she'ól* and then to *Gé Hinnom*.

I. *She'ól's* Most Suitable Rendering Is "Gravedom"

In seeking to grasp the meaning and to understand the usage of the basic Hebrew terms that concern the *destiny* of man, we come to the familiar word *she'ól*, which we should remember is always connected with death. Now, there are two principal reasons for the prevalent difficulty in grasping the true intent of *she'ól*—(1) conflicting translations, and (2) popular misconceptions prevalent concerning Hell. These must be clarified and the true intent ascertained.

1. DIFFICULTY CREATED BY VARIANT TRANSLATIONS.—First of all, variant translations of the Hebrew word *she'ól* have made it difficult for the English reader to grasp the basic meaning of the word. For example, in its sixty-five occurrences in the Old Testament *she'ól* has been given three different and actually contradictory renderings. In the Authorized Version,



she'öl is twenty-seven times rendered as "hell," thirty-five times as "the grave," and three times as "the pit." (It should be noted at the outset that "grave," as here used, means "the grave" in contrast to "a grave" [*qeber*] or mere burial place.)

Added to this primary difficulty is the fact that nine other words besides *she'öl* are also translated "pit." Furthermore, six other words, in addition to *she'öl*, are translated "grave."¹ This obviously complicates the situation.

In the Revised Version *she'öl* is translated as "hell" fourteen times, as "grave" fifteen times, and as "pit" six times. In thirty instances *she'öl* is left untranslated—just the plain transliteration "sheol." In the Revised Standard Version *she'öl* is transliterated in all but two occurrences—1 Kings 2:9 and Song of Solomon 8:6, in both cases being rendered "grave." The Jewish Publication Society Torah transliterates *she'öl* in all cases. As a convenience for those who wish to check the various translations, the sixty-five instances are listed in the note below.²

2. "HELL" A WHOLLY UNSUITABLE TRANSLATION.—The second major handicap to correct understanding is the popular misconception that Hell (one of the principal words by which *she'öl* is translated in the English versions) is commonly considered to be a place or state of fiery, endless, *present* torment for the wicked.

As mentioned, in a total of thirty-eight instances out of the sixty-five, in the Authorized Version *she'öl* is rendered either "the grave" or "the pit." Now, if *she'öl* were to signify the lake burning with fire and brimstone in which the wicked are generally believed writhing in endless conscious misery, then why should *she'öl* ever be rendered "grave," or "pit," which it is in more than half the passages? The question is per-

¹ See Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance*, art., "Hell" p. 368.

² The sixty-five instances in which *she'öl* occurs are: Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; Num. 16:30, 33; Deut. 32:22; 1 Sam. 2:6; 2 Sam. 22:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 11:8; 14:13; 17:13, 16; 21:13; 24:19; 26:6; Ps. 6:5; 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14 (2), 15; 55:15; 86:13; 88:3; 89:48; 116:3; 139:8; 141:7; Prov. 1:12; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11, 24; 23:14; 27:20; 30:16; Eccl. 9:10; Song of Solomon 8:6; Isa. 5:14; 14:9, 11, 15; 28:15, 18; 38:10, 14; 57:9; Eze. 31:15, 16, 17; 32:21, 27; Hosea 13:14 (2); Amos 9:2; Jonah 2:2; Hab. 2:5.

nent, and the answer is simple and basic: *In Old Testament times she'ól* meant the unseen secret resting place of *all* the dead—not the place of torment for the wicked.

In the first occurrence of *she'ól* (in Gen. 37:35, "For I will go down into the grave [*she'ól*] unto my son mourning"), the revisers in the Revised Version added a marginal note, "Heb. *she'ól*, the name of the abode of the dead, answering to the Greek *hadēs*, Acts 2:27." Certain texts seem to suggest this definition ("If I wait, the grave is mine house," Job 17:13), and it presents no difficulties if we do not take it to imply that the dead are *living* in *she'ól*, which is contrary to other plain texts describing the state of man in death.

3. "GRAVEDOM"—MOST SUITABLE RENDERING FOR "SHE'ÓL."—A careful examination of the sixty-five *she'ól* passages will show that the word "*gravedom*"³—not primarily the place of interment or the *locality* of departed spirits, but the *condition of death or the death-state*—offers the nearest suitable preponderant rendering. The insertion of "*gravedom*" for *she'ól* into the sixty-five texts where *she'ól* appears, would clarify the whole problem, and afford the nearest possible uniform meaning.

Thus harmony and consistency would result, and a semblance of order come out of much confusion. Added to this is the fact that the New Testament Greek *hadēs*, equivalent of the Hebrew *she'ól*, may likewise be consistently translated *gravedom*. This is further reason for approving this term.⁴

4. SUSPENSION OF LIFE IN "SHE'ÓL" AWAITING RESURRECTION.—In the Pentateuch and throughout the subsequent books of the Old Testament, *she'ól* is set forth as the place or state of death, or the dead, where deepest darkness and silence obtains, and in which there is total absence of life in any form. In *she'ól* all human activities cease. It is the awesome terminus

³ Employed by such eminent scholars as Canon Henry Constable, Prof. E. W. Bullinger, Congregationalist Chaplain J. H. Pettingell, and many others, as will be seen in volume 2.

⁴ See Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon*, art., "Hell," p. 368; also *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 35, p. 33.

toward which all human life moves. The dead who are therein give no sign of life. In *she'ól* nothing is seen or heard. There is no thought or perception, no activity of any kind. Good and bad alike are there—confined in darkness, with suspension of all life.

In *she'ól* "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom" (Eccl. 9:10). Each is wrapped in heavy, unconscious sleep,⁵ there to await the call of the Life-giver on the resurrection morn. Beyond any question *she'ól* is the place of death, darkness, and silence—*gravedom*.

The fact is particularly impressive that *she'ól*, or *gravedom*, stands in complete contrast with the state of the living (Deut. 30:15, 19; 1 Sam. 2:6-9), and is never connected with the living except by contrast. As to its duration, the dominion of *she'ól*, or the grave, lasts until, and will end only with, the resurrection which is its only exit. "I will ransom them from the power of the *grave* [*she'ól*]; I will redeem them from death . . . ; O *grave* [*she'ól*], I will be thy destruction" (Hosea 13:14. Cf. Ps. 16:10 with Acts 2:27).

Man himself, as a person or individual, goes down into *she'ól*, the state of death, and remains in *she'ól* during the entire period of death. Here are confirmatory texts:

"As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the *grave* [*she'ól*] shall come up no more" (Job 7:9)—that is, not until the resurrection.

"They [the wicked] spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the *grave* [*she'ól*]" (Job 21:13).

"Like sheep they [the foolish] are laid in the *grave* [*she'ól*]; death shall feed on them" (Ps. 49:14).

5. DARKNESS OF "SHE'ÓL" DISSIPATED BY LIGHT OF RESURRECTION.—The concept of death and *she'ól* as equivalents runs all through the Old Testament (Prov. 5:5; 7:27; Song of Solomon 8:6; Isa. 28:15; Hab. 2:5). Resurrection was understood and anticipated. But the sadness of the Old Testament Hebrew contemplation of *entrance* into the dark, silent, lifeless state of

⁵ Gen. 37:35; Job 14:12, 13; Ps. 6:5; 49:19; Eccl. 9:5-10; Isa. 38:18.

she'ól, gives way to the New Testament Christian emphasis on the *exit* from the grave under the gospel, where *she'ól's* dominion is broken and its rule abrogated by the triumphant resurrection of Christ from its power and domain. Job's words thus somberly tie *she'ól*, darkness, corruption, and the dust, together in "gravedom."

"If I wait, the *grave* [*she'ól*] is mine house: I have made my bed in the *darkness*. I have said to *corruption*, Thou art my father: to the *worm*, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now my hope? . . . They shall go down to the bars of the *pit* [*she'ól*], when our rest together is *in the dust*" (Job 17:13-16).

However, under the gospel, the exit from gravedom through the assurance of resurrection, becomes luminous and central. Thus sadness gives way to gladness.

6. "SHE'ÓL": PLACE OF DEATH, NOT LIFE.—*She'ól* is therefore the place or state of death. Not once does the Old Testament speak of *she'ól* in connection with life. Only in the poetical imagery of Isaiah 14 are those in *she'ól* said to perform the acts of living beings, as will be noted in Part IV. *She'ól* is therefore invariably connected with death. Hannah the prophetess speaks of God as the One who "bringeth *down* to the grave [*she'ól*], and bringeth up" (1 Sam. 2:6). In other words, *she'ól* is clearly, and always, the place of death.

"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the *grave* [*she'ól*]?" (Ps. 89:48).

"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of *hell* [*she'ól*] gat hold upon me" (Ps. 116:3).

7. "SHE'ÓL" AND "DEATH" ARE FREQUENTLY SYNONYMOUS.—*She'ól* and "death" are often equivalents. Proverbs speaks of the strange woman whose "feet go down to *death* [*maweth*]; her steps take hold on *hell* [*she'ól*]" (Prov. 5:5). "Her house is the way to *hell* [*she'ól*], going down to the chambers of *death*" (chap. 7:27). So, we repeat, *she'ól* and "death" are used in Holy Writ as synonyms. Thus: "We have made a covenant with *death*, and with *hell* [*she'ól*] are we at agreement" (Isa. 28:15). And Habakkuk describes the proud as one who

"enlargeth his desire as *hell* [*she'ól*], and is as *death*" (Hab. 2:5). This is invariable from the earliest book of the Old Testament through to its close.

We therefore rightly conclude that *she'ól* is the grave, or gravedom—the silent, invisible place to which God told sinful Adam he must go—"dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19)—not to a land of living ghosts. That was the understanding that Job had of *she'ól*, or the grave, as noted:

"If I wait, the *grave* [*she'ól*] is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. . . . They shall go down to the bars of the *pit* [*she'ól*], when our rest together is in the *dust*" (Job 17:13-16).

II. Origin of "Gehenna" (*Gē Hinnom*) Symbol of Final Destruction

The Old Testament origins of New Testament expressions are significantly illustrated by the term Gehenna, frequently employed by Christ Himself, but involving definitive allusions and backgrounds rooted in the history of ancient Israel, as for example in Isaiah 66:23, 24.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF "GEHENNA."—Historically, the Valley of Hinnom (or *Gē Hinnom*) was a narrow glen sweeping down from the southwestern wall of Jerusalem, and watered by the brook Kidron. Under the earlier Hebrew kings it was laid out in the form of pleasant gardens, groves, and pools. Here the wealthy had their summer homes. And at the southeastern extremity was the famed garden of Solomon with its Tophet, royal music grove, and its singers. But Hinnom came to be polluted by idolatrous shrines and "high places" in which the cruel and licentious rites of Egypt and Phoenicia were introduced, such as worship of the fire-gods by Ahaz (seventh century B.C.).⁶

⁶ Other references include "high places [idolatrous places] of *Tophet*" (Jer. 7:31); "they shall bury in *Tophet*" (v. 32, also 19:6); "even make this city as *Tophet*" (19:12); "defiled as the place of *Tophet*" (v. 13, also 2 Kings 23:10). It is to be called the "valley of slaughter."



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Valley of Hinnom, or "Slaughter," South of Jerusalem, Used for the Burning of Carcasses and Rubbish, Became a Symbol of Gehenna, and the Utter Destruction of the Wicked.

This pollution was intensified under Solomon's successors, like Manasseh in the sixth century B.C. (2 Chron. 33:1-10). The hideous fires of Molech were kindled, and the shrieks of children being immolated resounded through the beautiful valley, as idolatrous Jews passed their infants "through the fire" to Molech⁷—becoming symbolic of the wailing and gnashing of teeth to come. So *Tophet* came to mean "place of burning," and the Valley of Hinnom, of "slaughter" (Jer. 7:32). It thus became a type, in prophecy, of all that was flagrantly wicked and abominable to the faithful, and of the final judgment by destruction. In succeeding centuries blood flowed there in streams. And corpses, buried and unburied, filled many of the hollows—the bones of Jews, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Moslems, and Crusaders.

2. ASSOCIATED WITH UPSURGE OF NECROMANCY.—But there is yet another and related angle that needs to be noted:

"And he [Manasseh] caused his children to pass through the fire in

⁷ Lev. 18:21; 2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31.

the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger" (2 Chron. 33:6).

Thus the heathen fires of Molech were associated with an upsurge of necromancy, witchcraft, and wizardry.⁸ They all went together. And their later destruction, under Josiah, became a symbol of the final and utter destruction of all perversions—including the false teachings and practices of alleged communication with the living spirits of the dead, under the simulating deceptions of evil angels.

3. JOSIAH TRANSFORMS VALLEY INTO REFUSE PIT.—In the sixth century B.C., when Josiah came to the throne, as part of his religious reformation the groves were burned down, the pleasant gardens laid waste, and the idolatrous shrines ground to powder. To render the valley forever unclean the bones of the dead were strewn over its surface. Thenceforth it became a vast refuse pit, into which the offal of the city was cast, and the carcasses of animals, along with the dead bodies of criminals so wicked as to be adjudged unworthy of burial. Here worms preyed upon their putrefying flesh, and fires were kept burning to consume the corruption. It was the place where refuse was burned up.

Whatever was worthless was cast into the Gehenna fires, there to be utterly consumed. And in case any part remained unburned it was devoured by worms. So there was nothing left. Thus Isaiah wrote prophetically: "For Tophet is ordained of old; . . . the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa. 30:33).

By New Testament times the idolatry had ceased and the ancient human sacrifices were no longer offered. But the fires were still burning continually for the destruction of the refuse of Jerusalem. Hence the Greek term *Gehenna* (transliteration of the Hebrew *Gē Hinnom*) was used by Christ to

⁸ On Spiritualism see last twelve chapters of volume 2 of *Conditionalist Faith*.

designate the final fires of the destructive judgments of God. The dread word *Gehenna* occurs twelve times in the New Testament,⁹ eleven of which issued from the lips of Jesus Himself in solemn warning of the consequences of sin. *Gehenna* is synonymous with the coming "lake of fire" of Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15.

4. VIVID SYMBOL OF FINAL DOOM PORTRAYED.—Thus it was that the symbolism of the fires of the valley came to portray the final destruction of the wicked in the quenchless fires of *Gehenna*. Hence Isaiah prophesied of the devouring worm and fire:

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the *carcasses* of the men that have transgressed against me: for their *worm* shall not die, neither shall their *fire* be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. 66:24).

The dead bodies of the wicked lie in the valley, unburied and rotting, slowly burning amid the heaps of Jerusalem's refuse, devoured by the undying worm and quenchless flame until the whole is consumed. But the worm consumes only *dead* flesh—thus excluding the idea of sensibility and unending torment. And the fire precludes the concurrent presence of the worm.

But the two together symbolize complete destruction of the being that has ceased to live. And the *work* of the worm and fire is eternal—not in their duration but in their eternal results. The sight was an awful warning to all beholders, signifying an end, a dissolution, a disintegration, and a final disappearance—the doom of the wicked dead!

III. Three Supporting Citations Break Down Under Scrutiny

1. RECOURSE TO WEAK ARGUMENTS AN UNWORTHY PROCEDURE.—It is regrettable to see how, when bereft of strong, clear, positive statements from the Word declaring Innate Immor-

⁹ The twelve New Testament references to *Gehenna* (always rendered "hell") are: Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

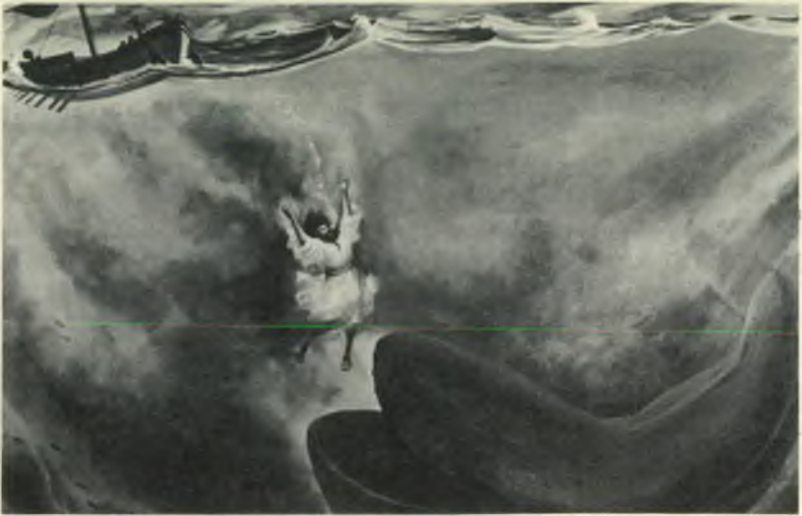
tality for all men—and deprived of clear-cut assurances of persisting, conscious existence of the soul (or spirit) following the crisis called “death”—how many Immortal-Soulists grasp at certain hazy, disputed passages, parables, and figurative statements to sustain their views.

Such a procedure would almost appear to be an act of desperation that would be disdained as unworthy under virtually all other circumstances. Recourse to such doubtful evidence would seem to indicate an inherent weakness of their case. A dubious assortment of such props does not provide a trustworthy platform for a fundamental belief. It will not bear much weight or strain, and cannot endure close scrutiny. Nevertheless, draft upon such is frequently made.

We must not close this Old Testament survey without examining, briefly, a few such citations and contentions that are commonly invoked. Then we will look into the inevitable Saul and the witch of Endor episode—always brought forward from Old Testament annals as primary testimony.

Without direct proof of Innate Immortality, recourse is often had to indirect supports—some of them of rather strange character. Curious Old Testament citations are claimed by certain believers in the immortality of the soul to support the postulate of disembodied life after death. First, there is the case of the prophet Jonah in *she'ól*, in the belly of the great fish (Jonah 2). Second, there is Isaiah's parabolic taunting ode on the king of Babylon in *she'ól* (Isa. 14:4-11). And third, there are the parabolic dirges by Ezekiel on the fate of Pharaoh and other monarchs, likewise in *she'ól* (Eze. 31; 32). These will suffice.

2. JONAH NOT DEAD: SO CASE IS DISMISSED.—As to the first episode, it can be dismissed with a couple of paragraphs—for the simple reason that Jonah was *not dead, but living and conscious* while in the “*she'ól*,” or grave as it were, of the fish's belly. Consequently this dramatic episode can have no bearing on the question of consciousness in death. Jonah's recorded prayer, offered while in the belly of the fish, was this: “I cried



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The Episode of Jonah, Swallowed by the Great Fish When Cast Overboard Alive, Had Nothing to Do With Life After Death—for Jonah Remained Alive.

by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of *hell* [*she'ól*; or margin, "*the grave*"] cried I, and thou heardest my voice" (Jonah 2:2).

Jonah went down into "*she'ól*," he said, when he descended into the waters in this living "submarine," where none but dead men had ever been before. It seemed to him that he was practically dead. The darkness and horror of his extremity made it a veritable grave. So Jonah cried out as if he were already dead—and he surely would have been dead in that living tomb had not God heard and speedily delivered him.

But to draw from this graphic narrative of *life in extremity* any valid conclusion as to man's continuing consciousness in *death* is reasoning from a totally false premise. The recital is *not dealing with death*. The case must consequently be dismissed forthwith, as the contention breaks down before it starts.

IV. Isaiah's Parabolic Taunting Ode on King of Babylon

The taunting ode, or parable, of Isaiah 14:4-11, is likewise presumed by various Immortal-Soulists to teach that *she'ól* is a land of active ghost life, with ghostly memories and

thoughts of life on earth. But in the narrative itself Isaiah twice plainly identifies *she'ól* with "the grave" (vs. 9, margin, and 11), while personifying for the moment the eerie shades of the dead as infused with life, in order to utter God's doom upon the tyrannical king of Babylon.

In the story conquered kings are parabolically represented as having thrones in *she'ól*, and sitting upon them as they had sat in the royal palaces from which they had been rudely ejected by the conquering arms of Nebuchadnezzar. And now, when the haughty king of Babylon, himself defeated and dead and descending to the grave, joins them in their dark domain, these departed monarchs are portrayed as rising up from their shadowy thrones to mock the fallen tyrant with feigned obeisance—but actually with insult and derision—just as in life they rendered him feigned homage.

1. PERSONIFIED TREES REJOICE OVER FALLEN MONARCH.—The whole earth rejoiced in Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow, and here the "*she'ól*-eans" rejoice over the downfall of this tyrannical king of Babylon, as the scene shifts from earth to *she'ól*, region of the dead. Even the fir trees and the cedars (v. 8) are introduced as uttering a derisive taunt over the fallen tyrant, and voicing their new security now that he is no more.

But this impressive parable was all in imagery—the inspired poet creating one of the classic odes of the Old Testament, to cast contempt upon the pride of Babylon, while its broad walls and mighty gates still stood imperiously on the plains of Chaldea. It was all in the striking figure of *prosopopoeia*,¹⁰ or personification, by which the dead are represented as speaking.

In the same passage the prophet makes the fir trees and cedars of Lebanon to speak (vs. 8-10)—thus to portray, through

¹⁰ Students of literature and language are well aware of the figure of *prosopopoeia*, or personification, wherein *things* are frequently represented as persons. In the Sacred Writings these include the members of the human body (Gen. 48:14; Ps. 35:10); animals (Gen. 9:5; Job 12:7); products of the earth (Nahum 1:4); inanimate things (Gen. 4:10); kingdoms, states, and countries (Ps. 45:12)—with human actions attributed to things (Gen. 18:20; Ps. 85:10).

this literary device, how death will reduce the king of Babylon to the same level as his subjects, and become fellow prisoners in the realm of death.

2. PATHS OF GLORY LEAD BUT TO GRAVE.—So this *she'ól*, to which these royal inhabitants were made to descend, was actually the silent grave (v. 11; v. 9, margin), or *gravedom*. And these kings are so represented under this figure of personification, thus to describe their real condition, and to say to the king of Babylon:

“Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the *grave* [*she'ól*], and the noise of thy viols: the *worm* [*rimmah*, “maggot”] is spread under thee, and the *worms* cover thee” (Isa. 14:10, 11).

Thus in the mind and teaching of Isaiah *she'ól* was none other than the grave, the place where worms revel in their feast on the dead—worms being grossly material, not spiritual. No one was to assume that the characters portrayed actually acted or spoke as pictured. The term “proverb,”²¹ as here used, simply means a parabolic taunt (v. 4, “taunting speech,” margin).

It was never Isaiah's purpose, in this impressive ode, to reveal the conditions of the death state. Rather, it was to forecast in graphic pictorial language God's coming judgment upon Israel's great oppressor, and to show that the paths of cruel glory “lead but to the grave.” Thus the second argument in behalf of conscious persistence of the soul after death likewise collapses.

V. Ezekiel's Parabolic Dirge Over Pharaoh of Egypt

The third plank in this wobbly platform of indirect evidence in behalf of Immortal-Soulism is this: In Ezekiel 31 and 32 a parabolic dirge of similar strain over Egypt proclaims the doom pronounced on Israel's foes—Egypt, Babylon, Assur,

²¹ The Heb. *masal* is rendered “proverb” nineteen times, and “parable” eighteen times in the Old Testament, “parable” being preferable here.

Elam, and Edom. The same figure of personification is employed in describing the overthrow of Pharaoh the oppressor. Here Pharaoh and his hosts, slain in battle against the king of Babylon, are portrayed in similar fashion. The "strong among the mighty" are represented as speaking from their graves in the midst of "hell" (*she'ól*), or gravedom, as he enters that dark domain to await his fate.

1. "SHE'ÓL" CONTRASTED WITH STATE OF LIVING.—Thus *she'ól*—"the nether parts of the earth" (Eze. 32:18, 24), full of graves, and so the land and state of the *dead*—is contrasted with the land and state of the living. The victims of slaughter had "gone down" to *she'ól* with their "weapons of war," and with their swords laid "under their heads" (v. 27). And when Pharaoh, figuratively portrayed as lying among them, saw the "multitude" of his enemies that also were slain, he was "comforted" by the sight (vs. 31, 32). It is all highly figurative and impressive, and not at all literal. But prediction of bitter overthrow is spoken of the conqueror of Israel. Here is the dirge:

"Thus saith the Lord God; In the day when he went down to the *grave* [*she'ól*] I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to *hell* [*she'ól*]¹² with them that descend into the *pit* [*she'ól*]: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted *in the nether parts of the earth*. They also went down into *hell* [*she'ól*] with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen" (Eze. 31:15-17).

2. PARABOLIC SCOURGE NOT CONSTRUED LITERALLY.—The portrayal was wholly parabolic, like Jotham's famous parable to Abimelech, making the trees elect a king over them, choosing a bramble, et cetera, in Judges 9:8-15. Then the imagery of the parable is openly applied: "This is Pharaoh and all his

¹² It is to be noted that the three terms "grave," "hell," and "pit" in these verses are all variant translations of the selfsame Hebrew word *she'ól*.

multitude, saith the Lord God" (Eze. 31:18). Then there follows, in chapter 32, an enumeration of the various forces of the slain that in life had caused such terror, but are now in *she'ól* (*gravedom*), "whose graves are set in the sides of the *pit* [*she'ól*]" (chap. 32:23)—their "princes" and mighty warriors "slain by the sword" (v. 29), which have "gone down to *hell* [*she'ól*, the grave] with their weapons of war" (v. 27).

They are there simply personified as speaking "out of the midst of *hell* [*she'ól*]" (v. 21). But the parabolic dirge is not to be construed literally. *She'ól* is the place of the silence of death. But the parable had nothing to do with the intermediate state. The lesson was that, having raised up a heathen nation to chasten His own people because of their moral departures, when that instrument has executed His will, God will not allow it to go beyond His purpose, but will send retribution upon it for its own sins and cruelties.

Such literary devices are samples of testimony sometimes unworthily brought forward to bolster the theory of consciousness in death, and of the persistence of disembodied souls or spirits in the nether world. But these have no actual bearing on the question.

VI. Saul Deceived by Necromancy of Medium of Endor

Turning from the figurative side, let us now examine a problem passage, constantly cited in support of Immortal-Soulism. Modern Spiritualism, or spiritism, is not new in its operations. Its ancient counterpart and forerunner had already made its tragic appearance back in ancient Israel's day, and before. But so grave was this corrupting and forbidden practice considered by God, and so sinister were its involvements, that under the theocracy those who sought out the practitioners of this evil art were to be "cut off," or excommunicated, from the commonwealth of Israel.

So heinous was the fraudulency of this pretended com-



T. MORAN, ARTIST

The Witch of Endor Perpetrated a Cruel Hoax on King Saul When a "Familiar Spirit" Simulated the Prophet Samuel—a Capital Offense in the Time of the Theocracy.

munication with the dead regarded that the mediums, when apprehended, were to be summarily put to *death* by stoning. The solemn warning against necromancy or consulting with "familiar spirits," was written thus into law by Israel: "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:31).

1. EVIL SPIRITS PERSONATING THE DEAD.—"Familiar spirits" were none other than "evil spirits," or demons—*fallen angels personating the dead*—appearing at the beck and call of a medium who had entered into sinister league with them. And here was the dread penalty then provided for such transgression, first for the seeker and then the medium:

"The soul that *turneth after* such as have familiar spirits, . . . I will even set my face against that soul, and will *cut him off* from among his people" (Lev. 20:6).

"A man also or woman that *hath* a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones" (v. 27).²³

That was the gravity of the evil traffic.

Later, this further admonition was given by the prophet Isaiah:

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isa. 8:19, 20).

This peeping and muttering refers to the incoherent incantations of the pagan mysteries, which they simulated. Such an inspired admonition surely constitutes a most solemn warning against all ancient or modern spiritism, and is an appeal to heed the declarations of the Word regarding the true nature and condition of man in death. And it should be added that the traditional belief that death is but life continuing on in spirit form, is the foundational basis of Spiritualism in its various forms, which has blighted the centuries, climaxing in these latter times.

2. SAUL'S RECOURSE TO FORBIDDEN CRAFT OF NECROMANCY.—Nevertheless, the case of Saul and the witch of Endor is constantly and fervently invoked by those maintaining the continued consciousness of the dead. Let us therefore examine the circumstances of that dramatic episode. Israel's apostate King Saul, when the Lord refused to answer him, sought out "a woman [or medium] that hath a familiar spirit" (1 Sam. 28:7), to inquire of her. Here is the story:

Disguising himself to avoid recognition, Saul came to the woman, significantly under the suggestive shelter of "night," and asked her to bring up the prophet Samuel, who had been dead for some time, to elicit information from him (v. 8). After being assured by an oath that she would not be betrayed or harmed for cooperation (vs. 9, 10), she then brought up

²³ Compare Deuteronomy 18:10-12 where witches and wizards, consultants with familiar spirits, or necromancers (i.e., seekers unto the dead) are declared to be an abomination unto the Lord. The modern counterpart is dealt with fully in the closing chapters of volume 2.

(not down, or forth) "*out of the earth*" (v. 13)—allegedly some subterranean region—one of the "gods" in characteristic spirit manifestation, whom she described as an "old man," and "covered with a mantle" (v. 14).

This materialization took place in the questionable abode of a forbidden, outlawed sorceress, invoking the alleged "shade" of the old prophet said to be wearing a "mantle." (It might be asked, If it was Samuel's "spirit," supposed to be with God, why the mantle? If it was Samuel's body, up from the grave, would it not rather be with "graveclothes," as with Lazarus [John 11:44]?)

3. SAUL DECEIVED; SLAIN FOR HIS TRANSGRESSIONS.—The record then states that Saul "perceived"—that is, *understood indirectly*, for he himself saw nothing—that it was "Samuel." But this evil "spirit," impersonating Samuel, first chided Saul for disquieting him when the Lord had departed from the king. This alleged "spirit" then proceeded to predict Saul's defeat and death. Perhaps this "lying spirit" here gave a true message, as in the case of Ahab of old (2 Chron. 18:19-22). But the sad sequel was simply this:

"So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even *against the word of the Lord*, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: *therefore he* [the Lord] *slew him*, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse" (1 Chron. 10:13, 14).

So back through the centuries this question of the nature and destiny of man, and purported communication with the "dead," has been a vital issue, constantly fraught with disaster for those disobeying the Word of God. Saul's act was a transgression, punishable with death. Why, then, is such testimony valid? But let us probe into this unsavory episode a little deeper.

4. CRUX OF THE WHOLE PORTRAYAL.—The crux of this whole occurrence hinges on whether this appearance, or materialization, was wrought by the power of God or was maneu-

As in the Séances of Ancient Necromancy, So the Mediums of Modern Spiritualism Produce Conniving Spirits to Simulate the Dead and De-lude the Living.



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vered by Satan. If by Satan, we may well look for deception, for he began his duplicity back in Eden by asserting the Innate Immortality of man, and has ever since persisted in his trickery by tenaciously perpetuating his original contention wherever and whenever he can gain a foothold.

Note the facts closely: Saul was violating God's express command by communicating with such a character and by engaging in a sinister practice sternly forbidden by God. He was deceived by this "familiar spirit" simulating Samuel, who first of all significantly put the medium on her guard as to the identity of Saul. And the appearance in the night, under the incantations of an abandoned woman, was that of "an old man" "with a mantle."

It is to be particularly noted that Saul had to ask the medium, "What sawest thou?" "What form is he of?" (1 Sam. 28:13, 14). Saul himself never saw the simulating spirit

that was brought "up" through the agency of Satan. And while the *appearance* was actual, it was simply a manifestation of ancient necromancy, sorcery, witchcraft, spiritism. It was a gross deception, a simulation of Samuel by a depraved "spirit," palmed off on the desperate apostate king, and with fatal results.

5. CRUEL HOAX AND ITS MODERN COUNTERPART.—One major difference between ancient and modern spiritism is that the medium of Endor then pretended to bring the spirits "up" from the lower regions. Now their present counterparts claim to bring them "down" from the upper spheres.

How dare any firm believer in the Word of God presume to appeal to this episode of Saul and the witch of Endor to prove the continuing living existence, or immortality, of the soul—unless he is prepared to deny the express declarations of the Inspired Word, and to maintain that ancient necromancy and modern spiritism are a *divine* gift, and that the blasphemous pretensions and contradictions of such lying spirits are to be accepted instead of the verities of the Scriptures of truth?

The Word of God expressly declares that when a man dies "in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4). But *fallen angels* do have supernatural knowledge and mystifying malign powers. And they have uncanny powers of deception. Of these we are to beware. We trespass at our peril.

Incidentally, the invoked "spirit" told Saul (through the medium), "To morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me" (1 Sam. 28:19). Might it not be pertinent to ask, Where was this rendezvous to be?—in the grave? or in Heaven, where the Immortal-Soulist would expect the Lord's prophet to be? or perchance in some kind of Purgatory or intermediate place? *Where*, we ask, and in what state? Further question: Do God's prophets and apostate kings go to the same place—if conscious?

6. GRANDEUR OF GOD'S WONDROUS PROVISION.—In the face of such artificial negativisms, how comforting it is to have not only the clear, positive, consistent testimony of the Old Testament concerning the actual mortality of man, but the

glorious assurance of immortality for the righteous as a gift from God through Christ, bestowed at His second advent and its attendant resurrection.

How good to know that in the interim of death man quietly sleeps until the great awakening. And finally, that the incorrigibly wicked will, after due and just punishment for their sins—and their rejection of the overtures and saving provisions of God—be ultimately and utterly destroyed, passing out of existence.

The infinite love, righteousness, justice, grace, and mercy of God, as the wondrous hope of man, stand out in impressive grandeur all the way from Genesis to Malachi. The inspired testimony of the Word is consistent and satisfying—and, above all, authoritative and final. Happy the lot of all who put their trust in the revealed provisions of God. And all this is amplified and intensified in the New Testament portrayal, now to be studied in fullness in Part II.

PART II

Comprehensive Witness of the New Testament

*Consummating Testimony of Christ and the
Apostles on the Origin, Nature, and Destiny
of Man*

Christ's Infallible Testimony on Life Versus Death

I. Definitive Testimony of Jesus, Supreme Witness of All Time

1. JESUS CHRIST—STAR WITNESS OF ALL TIME.—The apostle John presents the Lord Jesus Christ pre-eminently as "God." That is the characteristic difference between John's Gospel and that of the Synoptists, who largely emphasize His human side. Together they make up the perfect portrayal. So John presents the *God-man*. Jesus' utterances consequently have an authority unapproachable by any other witness or spokesman. Beyond challenge, He is the supreme authority, the Star Witness, than whom there is none greater and from whom there is no higher court of appeal. His declarations are consequently the ultimate in this area of inquiry. Jesus is the One for whom the worthies of old had waited all through Old Testament times. Now He speaks.

As might be expected, His witness is primarily affirmative rather than negative. He emphasizes *life* rather than *death*, though He deals definitively with both. But He is definitely affirmative and positive, and is never evasive. He gave no answers with dual intent, as was the custom of the Delphic oracles. Further, His teachings are changeless and abiding, not transitory or ephemeral. And He is inerrant, not faulty and fallible. There are no revisions or reversals of His positions. And Christ is unequivocal in His utterances. His declarations cannot be classed as "doubtful disputations" (Rom. 14:1), though they were the subject of acrimonious debate. His re-



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The Birth of the Christ Child United God With Man and Made It Possible for Him to Live and Die on Earth, and Rise as Conqueror of Death Forevermore.

sponses are frank and firm, never elusive or ambiguous. And He spoke with authority (Matt. 7:29).

2. FATAL CLASH COMES OVER MAN'S DESTINY.—From Him, then, we shall get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth on the nature and destiny of man. And that is just

what we need, and precisely what we want. As noted, Christ's presentations were always straightforward, explicit, and faithful. But because of His fidelity to truth concerning life and death, His utterances of necessity ran counter to tragic Jewish departures that had become entrenched in this area of vital teaching.

Christ came to earth. He came to die that others might have life—more abundant life, eternal life, and immortality, for through sin man had forfeited that imperative. He came to dispel error and confute falsehood, that truth might be exalted and right might prevail. He came to seal the doom of error and to crush its author. And He was ever faithful to His Heaven-born mission. But first let us go back to the beginnings, and to the foundations of the plan of redemption manifested in the incarnation, as disclosed in the opening chapters of John's Gospel.

II. Transcendent Scope and Significance of Incarnation

The incarnation of the Son of God was the most stupendous event in the history of the world—yes, of the universe—to that time. God then became man. Through this mysterious means Christ became identified with the human race. The plan of redemption, conceived in the inscrutable wisdom and infinite power of God from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), was formulated to meet the contingency of sin's tragic entrance into the newly created earth, and the fatal fall of man. The incarnation, then, is the core of God's redemptive method for the recovery of lost man and his forfeited life. It is the center, the essential, the transcendent heart of Christianity (John 3:16).

1. MASTER KEY TO ALL REDEMPTIVE HISTORY.—The incarnation was not a strange isolated event, breaking suddenly into human history. Everything before led up to it; and all that followed after—the cross and the resurrection, the ascension and heavenly ministry, and the final restitution of all things—

grew out of it and were dependent upon it. It was the initial step, and thus constitutes the master key to all redemptive history.

Everything moved toward the incarnation until its accomplishment. The messages of prophets and seers all forecast and led up to it. The Gospels are the record of its accomplishment, and the New Testament is the unfolding of its wonders. It was the mysterious "secret," held in silence through eternal times (1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:3-5; Col. 1:26). And it was in this chosen way that Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

To effect the restoration of man, God became man and dwelt among men. And the supreme purpose of this entrance of the Eternal Son into our nature was to accomplish man's redemption, to save him from destruction, and to restore the endless life he had forfeited. The incarnation invasion of human history was to snatch the scepter from the malign usurper and effect his overthrow. In this divine plan Christ's humanity was representative, for He became the "second Adam," the head of a new race, and thus provided the way back to God. So it was that God adopted humanity in the person of His Son.

2. BECOMING MAN, HE RETAINS HUMANITY FOREVER.—In the incarnation, eternity entered into the conditions of time. At His incarnation Christ became what He was not before. He accepted the limitation of a human bodily life as the mode of His existence while on earth. And upon His ascension He carried His glorified body into highest Heaven (Acts 1:9-11; 7:56; cf. Dan. 7:13), there to retain it forever, for when He returns at the Second Advent He comes as the Son of *man* (Matt. 24:39; 25:13, 31; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 13:26; Luke 21:36; Rev. 14:14).

Thus the incarnation is the most stupendous event that human thought can conceive—whether in itself or in its consequences, which have no limit. It was actual union of the Creator with the creature, effected in the person of the Eternal Son of God. When He became man He did not cease to be



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The Only Scars to Be Borne Throughout Eternity Will Be Upon the Person of Our Saviour, Who Died in Our Stead.

God, but became the one and only God-man. He bridged the gulf between God and man. Through this means He assumed the headship of the human race, and became the "second man," the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

In this way humanity was wedded to divinity in the adoption of perpetual humanity by Jesus Christ. But, we repeat for emphasis, in the union of the Godhead with humanity, divinity did not destroy the humanity, and the humanity remained in its integrity that divinity might be revealed in and through it. In His incarnation Christ became the focal point of redemption's converging lights. In Him was embodied light, *life*, love, righteousness, wisdom, power, and glory—the sevenfold revelation of God's power to save.

3. RETAINS ONLY SCARS OF SIN IN UNIVERSE.—Christ did not choose between dying at one time instead of at another. Rather, He chose between dying and not dying. His death was a death for *sin*, and sin is rebellion against God. His death canceled the curse, lifted the ban, purchased our pardon, and restored lost man and his forfeited *life*. That is why the incarnation is of such transcendent significance.

Jesus Christ united Heaven and earth in one person—God and man—and since His return to Heaven He has not ceased to

be man. In His own body He will bear the only scars of sin left in eternity—the scars on His hands, His side, and His feet. Sin's ugly scars on man will be healed forever. When Christ returned to the throne He carried with Him the manhood He had assumed, and bore it into the glory in which the Eternal Word had dwelt from the beginning. He is thus identified with man forever. That was the price of our redemption. That was the cost of our recovery of the life lost in Eden. That is the wonder of His love and grace.

4. PURPOSE OF INCARNATION WAS FIVEFOLD.—Summarizing, we may say that the purpose of Christ's incarnation was—

(1) To reveal God to the world (John 1:14, 18; 17:6, 26; 1 Tim. 3:16).

(2) To redeem man by bearing the sin of man (Isa. 53:4-16; John 1:29, margin; Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 3:16).

(3) To bring God and man together (Gen. 28:12; Matt. 1:23; John 1:51; 1 Peter 3:18).

(4) *To bring back endless life to dying man* (John 3:15, 16; 4:14; 5:24; 10:28; 11:25, 26; 14:19; 17:3).

(5) To destroy the devil and his works (John 12:31; 16:33; Rom. 8:1-4; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8).

III. Eternal Life—Throbbing Heart of John's Gospel Story

The Gospel of John, written by the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20), is the best-loved book of all time. Sublime in thought and unsurpassed in word, it has, more than any other New Testament message, captured the heart of mankind. Now John's portrait of Christ is pre-eminently the portrayal of His deity. And "love" and "life," as revealed and embodied in Christ, are the predominant points of emphasis throughout.

It may rightly be said that the central message and constant emphasis of the Gospel of John is that of *life eternal through Jesus Christ* as God's sole provision for escaping the sinner's

designated doom of utter and ultimate destruction (John 3: 16). The basic distinction between the lot of the saved and the fate of the lost is pre-eminently one of life—life without end, life *through* Christ alone, and *with* Him forever in His eternal kingdom to come. But only as one senses the dreadful destiny of sinful man apart from Christ, as involving total death and utter destruction, does the gospel of life stand out in its sublime grandeur and glory. Now let us go back to the beginnings.

1. FROM BLEAKNESS OF SIN TO RADIANCE OF SALVATION.—

The opening chapters of the Old Testament part of the Book of God set forth the account of the sin and fall of our first parents from their estate of original innocence, and the doom they brought upon themselves and their posterity. This formed the bleak background for the radiant gospel of salvation that immediately began to unfold with steadily increasing clarity.

The law set forth the fearful penalty of *death*, that the gospel might present its wondrous offer of *life*. After the darkness of sin, came the glorious light of salvation. Thus a message of hope was commingled even with the thunders of Sinai. From the time of Eden onward the depression of the long night of estrangement from God was relieved by the outshining of the twin stars of hope and promise, as men watched and waited for the appearing of the Saviour throughout Old Testament times.

2. NEW TESTAMENT A NEW REVELATION OF LIFE.—

We now come to the New Testament times. The New Testament is not merely a fuller and clearer revelation of the divine truths already disclosed in the Old. It is all that. But it is vastly more—it is a new revelation. While embracing and confirming, and harmonizing with, all the truths unfolded in the Old Testament—and revealing them even more clearly—the New Testament contains, we stress, other and higher truths that distinguish it as a distinctly *new revelation*. We use this expression advisedly. And this, as just stated, is pre-eminently a revelation of *life through Jesus Christ alone*. The Old Testa-

ment contains in undeveloped form—in type and symbol, prophecy and promise—inklings of truth only unfolded in fullness in the New Testament. There is an unmistakably progressive unfolding of revelation.

And that broad and deep line of demarcation between the Old and the New is this clear revelation of life and immortality for mortal man, through Christ, *effected by a new birth now and a resurrection from the dead at Christ's second advent*. And along with these comes the inseparable corollary of the ultimate destruction of all evil through the almighty power of the Son of God our Saviour, now set forth in fullness and inescapable clarity.

3. BROUGHT ABOUT BY NEW SPIRITUAL INGENERATION.—This life is a new and higher life than our natural life, and he to whom it is given becomes a "new creature." Thus: "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature [*ktisis*, "creation"]" (2 Cor. 5:17).

In a way, it is the Genesis story all over again. A new life is generated in a responsive man by the Spirit of God. And it is as superior to the old Adamic life as it is more enduring. The first generation is natural and earthly, and because of sin leads to death. The second is supernatural, from above, and leads to eternal life with its wondrous, ultimate immortality bestowed at the resurrection.

This new life is "begotten" not of flesh and blood, nor of the will or power of man, but solely of God (John 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:23). And it will, in time, be invested with a new and transformed spiritual body, like unto Christ's glorious body, that will rise to meet Christ the Life-giver at His second coming (1 Cor. 15:49-53), thus to take its purchased and destined place in His everlasting kingdom.

Hints and foregleams of this new life are scattered throughout the pages of the Old Testament. These are but anticipatory. Let it never be forgotten that only in the New Testament is it distinctly revealed as the *gift of God through Jesus Christ*

(Rom. 6:23; John 3:16), by whose own death and resurrection eternal life is unimpeachably assured to the believer.

IV. Two Progenitors, Two Births, Two Contrasting Destinies

Two matching lines of thought run through John's Gospel—(1) The incarnation of Deity (the divine nature) in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that involved the union of the divine and human in Christ, in order that He might redeem man. He was both God and man, yet not two but one, in the unity of one person. And (2) the parallel affirmation, from the first paragraph to the last, that this incarnation of the divine Word had for its supreme object the giving of everlasting life to mankind through redemptive union with Christ, the Light of life. But it was these twin truths that aroused the incredulity and awakened the intense hostility of many of the Jews.

At the very outset of the Gospel of John the sublime declaration is made: "In him [Jesus] was *life*¹ [that is, the fountain of life]; and the *life* was the light of men" (John 1:4). "Life," as we have seen, is one of the two characteristic words of John's Gospel, appearing many times in this short missive. Jesus came not, as did John the Baptist, merely to bear witness of the light of life, but pre-eminently as the actual Life-giver, "the way, the truth, and the *life*" (John 14:6).

He is the very source and embodiment, the herald and bestower of eternal life. The "*first* man Adam was made a *living soul* [*psuchēn zōsan*];" but "the last Adam was made a *quickening spirit* [*pneuma zōpoioun*]," or life-giving spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). And John's whole Gospel is the unfolding and applying of that glorious truth and provision. But let us pause to define and differentiate that life.

1. SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE TERM "LIFE."—Cer-

¹ That life was manifested (John 1:4); is obtained (3:16); is possessed (4:14); is sustained (6:35); is ministered (7:38); is abounding (10:10); and is resurrective (11:24, 25).

tain words are characteristic in John's Gospel. One of the most conspicuous and striking is "life" (*zōē*), which appears 36 times. The verb "love" (*agapaō*) is used 37 times. And "light" (*phōs*) is found 23 times, and is used especially of Christ and of God (John 1:4, 5; 8:12; 1 John 1:5). But the *zōē*-life holds a unique place. It is essential that we grasp John's use of the term "life." There are three Greek words rendered by the one word "life." Note the fundamental distinctions:

(1) *Zōē* (life) is the opposite of death, which is the end of life—the result of the sentence and punishment of God against sin. *Zōē* is life in all manifestations. It is the principle and essence of life. Its one and only source is God—the Living One, the Fountain of Life. We live only in and by His life. He originates and sustains life by giving it out of Himself. "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

(2) *Psuchē* (life) is used of the life of man—which can be lost, destroyed, saved, laid down, et cetera—58 times in the New Testament, and is rendered "life" 39 times and "soul" 19 times. It is used of man as an individual 14 times.

(3) *Bios* is manner of life, the period or duration of life, the means of living.²

John uses *zōē* in a theological sense to describe the life that comes to the Christian through Christ. Actually he calls it *zōēn aiōnion* (eternal life, everlasting life) 16 times in his Gospel. In other cases the context makes it clear that it is eternal life that he is talking about.

This life (*zōē*) belongs to those to whom it is communicated. It is the life the Christian has now *in Christ*, as the "gift of God" (Rom. 6:23), by faith in Christ (John 6:27; 10:28). "He that hath the Son hath life [*zōēn*]; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

In general, the other New Testament writers use *zōē* in this theological sense, even where the word "eternal" is not connected with it. Now let us continue.

² See Bullinger, *Critical Lexicon*, p. 462; *The Companion Bible*, Appendixes 170 (p. 191) and 110 (p. 153).

2. NATURAL DYING LIFE; SUPERNATURAL ENDLESS LIFE.—

From Adam, our natural progenitor, we obtained only a mortal, transitory life received through *natural* generation. Nothing else, and nothing higher, could come from or through him. But in our glorious Spiritual Progenitor is vested the life that is spiritual and undying, which He gives through *re-generation*. This distinction between the natural life and the supernatural is very real, and is everywhere drawn throughout the New Testament, and particularly in the Gospel of John.

In general the two words *psuchē* and *zōē* in the Greek are used to designate and differentiate them. But the translation of these two distinct and often antithetical terms by the single word "life" (as the English does not have the dual equivalents) has obscured this distinction. Nevertheless, there are *two* separate progenitors, *two* separate births, and *two* separate destinies. Christ came that whosoever believeth in Him might be "saved" *from* death and *unto* life. He came to confer eternal life upon repentant, believing, mortal men.

This was the sublime and revolutionary truth that Christ, at the very outset of His public ministry, enunciated and pressed home to Nicodemus. Note the precise phrasing:

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "That which is *born* of the *flesh* is *flesh*; and that which is *born* of the *Spirit* is *spirit*. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.⁸ 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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:3, 6, 7, 14-17).

3. NICODEMUS THE PHARISEE HELD TO INNATE IMMORTALITY.—Nicodemus, the Pharisee and believer in Innate Immortality, had but vague notions of life beyond the present. He

⁸ *Zōē aiōnios* (life everlasting). Note that the adjective "everlasting" (*aiōnios*) appears only with *zōē*, never with *psuchē*. (See John 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3.) *Aiōnios* occurs with *zōē* 16 times in John's Gospel and 6 times in 1 John.



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As Moses Lifted Up the Brazen Serpent of Old That the Dying Israelites Might Have Life, So Must Christ Be Lifted Up on Calvary for Dying Humanity, to Restore Lost Immortality.

obviously held to a prolongation of man's *natural* life beyond the present state, not the reception of a *new* life. It was the same old immortal life of the "soul" of Platonic philosophy,

Jesus Tells the Woman of Samaria of the Living Water—the Everlasting Life—That He Came to Give to Her and to Every Other Thirsting Soul Who Would Seek It.



H. HOFMANN, ARTIST

accentuated by Philo, after the soul has escaped from the encumbering body—a kind of ghostly, innate, immortal entity—that he and others had imbibed from the widespread penetrations of Greek philosophy current among the Pharisees. Nicodemus therefore not only had no conception of that new spiritual life, which comes from a new spiritual birth—and which is presented in the New Testament as the sole foundation for man's hope of immortality—but alas he was destitute of the means of conceiving it, for—"the *natural* [*psuchikos*] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* [*pneumatikōs*] discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

4. "LIVING WATER" SPRINGING UP UNTO "EVERLASTING LIFE."—It was this same essential doctrine that Christ next attempted to teach, from a slightly different approach, in conversing with the woman at the well in Samaria. But neither could her mind, unilluminated by the Spirit of God, apprehend such spiritual realities. She understood the impressive figures used by

Christ only in their lower material sense. But scriptural figures are employed to represent realities, and not something fanciful. This spiritual life of which Christ spoke was not unreal but actual—even more real and substantial than the natural life of man. Observe Christ's approach:

"If thou knewest the *gift of God* [eternal life through Christ], and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water [*hudōr zōn*]. . . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a *well* [*pēgē*, "fountain," "spring"] of water springing up into *everlasting life*" (John 4:10-14).

5. CENTRAL DOCTRINE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.—The Gospel of John is pre-eminent in setting forth this great doctrine of *life eternal only through Christ*. The doctrine of a future life was definitely revealed in the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. And in their earlier centuries—during the time of the living Hebrew prophets—Israel had generally held thereto. But in the later inter-Testamental period, under the impact of Greek philosophy, the Jewish religion had been gravely marred and corrupted.

The Pharisees had come to hold the philosophical doctrine of the natural immortality of the natural life of man *as the peculiar inheritance of the children of Abraham*. This blinded their eyes to the truth that Christ brought to them. Their minds were closed, their understanding darkened, so they could not comprehend.

That was the great barrier.

Then when Christ showed the fallacy of their hopes in any immortality except through Himself, and that there was nothing in the Old Testament Scriptures—which they meticulously invoked—to justify their philosophical hopes and expectations, they were affronted and angered. If they would but "search the scriptures," Christ said wistfully, going to the heart of the issue, they would find no doctrine of immortality for man, save through the promised Life-giver. That was the stumbling block.

6. CONTROVERSY OVER BREAD FROM HEAVEN AND RESURRECTION.—In the sixth chapter of John, Christ's prolonged discussion with the Jews is recorded, designed to prove that He is indeed the Bread of Life, that while the fathers actually ate manna in the wilderness, nevertheless they *died*; but that He is the life-giving Bread that came down from Heaven that, should a man eat thereof, he would *not die* the second, or final, death (John 6:50). This basic declaration He iterated and reiterated to them in various ways.

But He was actually pressing upon one point—that His work on earth was to *give life, everlasting life*, and to prevent men from ultimately *dying* and *perishing* in the second death. He declares that whoso eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood, "*hath eternal life*"; and that He "*will raise him up at the last day*" (v. 54).

"As the living Father hath sent me," Christ declared, "and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he *shall live by me*." And "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (vs. 57, 58). He insists, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life *in you*" (v. 53). This vital discourse, delivered in Capernaum, presents the crux of the conflict with the Jews, and discloses the basic battleground of the entire controversy. What is said beyond this is but a repetition of what is here declared, only with a persistence and fullness that aroused great consternation and marked antagonism on the part of the Jewish leaders. Now let us get the setting.

7. JEWISH CHALLENGE OF ADVENT, RESURRECTION, DAMNATION.—Christ was at Jerusalem at one of the feasts, and had healed the impotent man at the pool. He declared that the power of raising the dead and giving them life rests with Himself. Heated controversy ensued, ostensibly because it was the Sabbath day, and the Jews challenged Christ's right and authority to heal on that consecrated day. Observe it in some detail, in the precise words of John, for here is the heart of Christ's continuing controversy with the Jews. Here He leads

on into His second advent, and the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation." Note His bold claims and searching declarations:

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and *quickeneth* [*zōopoieō*, "make alive," giveth life to] them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into *condemnation* [*krisin*, "judgment"]; but is passed from [out of] death unto life" (v. 24).

"For as the Father hath life *in himself*; so hath he given to the Son to have life *in himself*" (v. 26).

But under the impact of Greek philosophy, such *life* as a special gift from God had been wholly obscured by the pervasive false hope of Innate Immortality. They were therefore offended at Christ's declaration that there was life only in Himself. But, He said:

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the *graves* [not in Heaven or Hell] shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the *resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [*krisēōs*, "judgment," condemnation unto death; cf. v. 24]" (vs. 28, 29).

"[Ye] Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they [the Scriptures] are they which testify of *me* [the Life-giver]. And ye will not come to *me*, that ye might have life" (vs. 39, 40).

8. BLINDED BY PLATONISM, JEWS REJECT LIFE-TRUTH.—There was no abatement in Christ's continuing emphasis. He proclaimed the same truth after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, with its feeding of the five thousand (John 6). Here again Christ presses on His persistent theme of life and death. He declared that man cannot of himself "live for ever." This emphatic assertion is repeated twenty-eight times in the first six chapters of John.

"Labour not for *the meat* which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto *everlasting life*, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (John 6:27).

As the life of the body is sustained by material food, so this higher life—this spiritual life which He gives—must likewise

have its spiritual life and nourishment, and from the same divine source. This physical life cannot be sustained forever, even if manna were supernaturally given from Heaven, as of old. The Jewish fathers, who ate the manna in the wilderness, were all *dead* (vs. 49, 50). So Christ's immediate hearers must die not only a natural death but also the *second* death if they have no higher, divine principle of life ingenerated into them. And this new life, received from Christ, can be maintained only by the closest union with Him. To such a life there will be no end.

9. MANY FOLLOWERS TURN AWAY BECAUSE OF CLAIMS.—

This entire chapter 6 is remarkable for the constant reiteration of this one basic truth. But the Jews could not, or would not, receive it. Christ's bold—and to them brazen—claims as to being the Divine Giver of the higher, supernatural life were abhorrent to them. The concept of the Innate Immortality of the soul had so captivated and possessed their minds as to block completely their understanding of the great gospel truth of *the life and immortality received solely by a new birth through a Divine Saviour*. And not only were the scribes and Pharisees affronted, but many also of Christ's former followers were offended at His doctrine (v. 61). Be it particularly observed that it was this emphasis that caused the final break with the Jews and the separation of numerous disciples.

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:66-68).

Here is the Biblical recital. Though it might appear tedious, it is the heart of the testimony of the New Testament gospel witness. Read the inspired words:

"And Jesus said unto them, I am⁴ the *bread of life* [*artos tēs zōēs*]: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (v. 35).

⁴This is the first of a series of "I am" utterances—I AM the bread of life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51); the light of the world (8:12; 9:5); the door of the sheep (10:7); the resurrection and the *zōē*-life (11:25); the true and living way (14:6); and the true vine (15:1, 5).

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have *everlasting life*: and I will raise him up at the last day"⁶ (v. 40).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me *hath everlasting life*. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and *are dead*. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and *not die*" (vs. 47-50).

"I am the *living bread* [*ho artos ho zōn*, the Living One] which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall *live for ever*: and the bread that I will give is my flesh [Myself], which I will give for the *life of the world*" (v. 51).

Bread is figurative of the maintenance of substance. That is what Christ came to supply.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye *eat the flesh* [Heb. idiom for believing and receiving] of the Son of man, and drink his blood [blood, symbol of life], ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, *hath eternal life*; and I will raise him up at the last day" (vs. 53, 54).

"As the *living Father* hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and *are dead*: he that eateth of this bread *shall live for ever* [opposite of second death]" (vs. 57, 58).

"It is the *spirit* that quickeneth [*zōopoieō*, "to make alive," "to give life to," especially eternal life]; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*, and they are *life*" (v. 63).

That was Christ's unwavering witness to the Jews in His crisis hour.

V. Rejection Comes Over Amazing "Zōē-Life" Claims

I. CONFLICT DEVELOPS INTO SUPREME CRISIS.—It is in John 8, after Jesus had declared, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the *light of life*" (v. 12), that His claims were sharply challenged. Nevertheless He again affirmed that God in Heaven was His Father. And now He stressed the matter and relationship of *death*, life's opposite and redemption's alternative. And

⁶ "Last day," used only in John, and appearing six times—6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48—meaning at the end of the age, and coming of Christ.

such death would, He declared, result from rejection of Him. Solemnly He said:

"I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall *die in your sins* [losing the true, eternal life]: whither I go, ye cannot come" (v. 21).

"Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall *die in your sins*: for if ye believe not that I am he [the sole Giver of life], ye shall *die in your sins*" (vs. 23, 24).

Christ's declaration of His deity, and pronouncement of judgment, aroused their deepest indignation. After they had maliciously charged Him with being "born of fornication" (v. 41) instead of "from above" as He claimed (v. 23), and Christ had reaffirmed that He indeed "proceeded forth and came from God" (v. 42), He next sternly charged them with being children of "your father the devil [the accuser and trader]" (v. 44). And He added with penetrating significance:

"He was a murderer [for death came through him] from the beginning [of the human race], and abode not in the truth. . . . When he speaketh a *lie*, he speaketh of his own: for he is a *liar*, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Christ thus harked back to the original lie in Eden—"Ye shall *not* surely die" (Gen. 3:4)—with all its train of unutterable woe. Then follows Christ's tremendous declaration, "If a man keep my saying, *he shall never see death*" (John 8:51). That is, he shall not be visited with the *forever-death*, eternal death, the "second death," from which there is no resurrection.

Jesus' final affirmation was, "Before Abraham was [came into existence, or was born], I am" (v. 58). It was following this incredible utterance that they took up stones to cast at Him.

2. AGAIN SOUGHT TO STONE HIM BECAUSE OF CLAIMS.—The same truths are enforced in chapter 10, under the metaphors of "the door of the sheep" (v. 7)—by which they were to enter into life—and the "good shepherd" (v. 11). Of the door Christ said:

"I am *the door*: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved,

and shall go in and out, and find pasture. . . . I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it *more abundantly*" (vs. 9, 10).

Christ, then, is the solitary door to eternal life. Through Him mortal man again has right of access to the tree of life (Rev. 2:7).

Then as to the Good Shepherd:

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my *life* [*psuchēn*, the natural life, and *not*, be it noted, *zōē*] for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:14-16).

"And I give unto them *eternal life*; and they shall *never perish*, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (v. 28).

It was for this bold twofold claim that they "took up stones again to stone him" (v. 31; cf. 8:59) for "blasphemy," because, they said, Thou "makest thyself God" (chap. 10:33). "They sought again to take [arrest] him: but he escaped out of their hand" (v. 39). The crisis was on in dead earnest. Thus there was deep significance to Christ's outspoken utterances on the nature and destiny of man.

3. MIRACULOUS RAISING OF LAZARUS FROM DEATH.—This great truth of Christ as the Life-giver is next graphically illustrated in chapter 11, in the dramatic episode at the grave of Lazarus. Mary and Martha had some knowledge of the doctrines of the resurrection, the judgment, and the life to come. They did not share the views of the Sadducees. So when Jesus came, Martha said to Him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (v. 21). Then Jesus assured her, "Thy brother shall *rise* again [*anistēmi*, "stand up"]" (v. 23). And when she boldly confessed that she knew that her brother would "rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (v. 24), Jesus immediately uttered another of His great "I am" sayings:

"I am the resurrection, and *the life* [*hē zōē*]: he that believeth in me, though he were dead [even though he should die], yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth [or is alive at My second coming] and believeth in



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The Transfiguration Symbolized the Two Categories of the Redeemed—Moses by Resurrection and Elijah by Translation—to Occur Simultaneously at the Second Advent.

me shall never die [never perish in the final, irrevocable second death*]" (vs. 25, 26).

So, according to Christ it is not conscious survival of those who believe on Him that occasions immortality, but their future resurrection from the dead. Those who have died the first, or natural, death, believing in Christ, will be raised. And those believers who will be alive at His coming again shall be changed, transformed without dying. And together both shall simultaneously enter upon that life that shall never end, and over which the second death has no power—when they shall have received their immortality.

This declaration by our Lord brought the recognition and confession from Martha, "I believe that thou art the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of God, which should come into the world"

* The first death is only a relatively short sleep (Ps. 146:4; 1 Cor. 15:20, 21, 51-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). It is a brief lying down to rest "from the evil to come" (Isa. 57:1, 2), during which time the life of the righteous is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Physical death comes to righteous and wicked alike, but the righteous have the promise that they will not be hurt of the "second death" (Rev. 2:11; cf. 20:6).

(v. 27; cf. Matt. 16:16). Then it was that Jesus, at the tomb, lifted His voice and commanded, "Lazarus, *come forth*" (John 11:43), just as if He were arousing him from a deep sleep. "And he that *was* dead came forth" (v. 44). Lazarus, receiving life, heard and obeyed the summons. Lazarus, it should be noted, was sleeping in the grave (v. 44), not singing praises in Heaven, when Christ called him.⁷

It was a startling exercise, while Jesus was here on earth, of the divine, life-giving power He claimed to possess. There is no hint that any "soul" had left Lazarus' body and had ascended to Heaven, thence to be brought back. Jesus did not address an independent, conscious "soul." He did not say, "Soul or spirit of Lazarus, come back down to earth, and live again in the flesh." The four days in the tomb were to Lazarus a period of oblivion and unconsciousness (Ps. 146:4). He gave no account of the glories and activities of Heaven—for Lazarus had nothing to relate. He had been *asleep*, in unconscious sleep. Now he was awakened.

Death might be defined as the great hiatus, the appointed break between the initial probationary earthly life, and the life that is to come following the resurrection. It is the little period of quiescence before the full immortal life for eternity for the redeemed.

As a result there was a large increase of disciples (John 11:45), which fact alarmed the Jewish leaders. Then comes the significant statement: "Then *from that day forth* [the day of the raising of Lazarus] they [the Jewish leaders] took counsel together [in their Council, or Sanhedrin, John 11:47] for to put him to death" (v. 53)—seeking some juridical pretext. They thus rejected the *Life*, refused the *Light*, and spurned the *Love* incarnate. And the record further states that thenceforth Jesus "walked no more openly among the Jews" (v. 54). So they sought for Him, "that they might *take* him" (v. 57).

4. BURDEN OF CHRIST'S HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER.—And just

⁷ It is specifically those who are "in their graves" whom Christ will call forth and raise up at the last day (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48).

before the close of His earthly life and mission, this same doctrine of *Life Only in Christ* was finally set forth in His intercessory high priestly prayer, recorded in John 17.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give *eternal life* to as many as thou hast given him. And this is *life eternal*, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*" (John 17:1-4).

That was the climax of the remarkable and cumulative series of life incidents—Christ's unchanging burden and witness to the close of His life and ministry.

5. "LIFE SOLELY IN CHRIST" JOHN'S PARAMOUNT THEME.—The foregoing leading citations are all from the Gospel of John, though there are other similar passages. The conclusion seems inescapable that this was one of the main themes of John's Gospel, as also of his Epistles. This is evident from the fact that in the first six chapters of John he declares, in varying forms, in no less than twenty-eight times—and more than fifty times in his several writings—that *Christ is the sole source of eternal life*, of which our Lord testified so earnestly and with such constant reiteration during the brief period of His earthly incarnation.

This was the boon He came to bring to dying men. To provide this He gave up His own natural life (John 10:11, 14), which purchased salvation and restored the wondrous life that He freely offers to all who truly believe in Him.

6. CONTINGENT IMMORTALITY GIVES HONOR TO CHRIST.—This life is not something that men can rightfully claim as their own inalienable, or inherent, prerogative. Rather, it is a life Christ has purchased back for man by the shedding of His own precious blood, that may be ours by gift. And it is to be remembered that man's immortality, even in the endless days of eternity, will ever and only be *contingent* immortality—dependent always upon God. There is consequently no place

for pride, independence, or self-sufficiency concerning the divine provision of life.

This glorious doctrine of life and immortality, which illuminates the pages of John's Gospel, while humbling to the pride of man, extols the honor and glory of Christ. But ever since the days of Eden, Satan has sought to rob Christ of His peculiar glory as the Giver of *eternal life* to His followers. Christ indeed saves from sin, suffering, and misery. But He does infinitely more; He saves from actual, final *death, perishing, destruction* (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10)—the "second death," from which there will be no awakening.

It is because Christ has risen triumphant over death, and ever liveth, that we shall rise at His "trumpet" call (1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17), to live forevermore with Him. And the life, which He bestows, is a life of unending joy and blessedness in His everlasting kingdom and presence. That is the fullness of the gospel of salvation, the more abundant life, the endless life for all eternity! Such is God's unspeakable gift.

This revelation of the eternal life through Christ, in the Gospel of John, surely makes it luminous with new meaning and significance. It throws a fresh and radiant light upon these familiar passages that makes them central in our comprehensive survey of the testimony of the Supreme Witness concerning the nature and destiny of man.

Coordinates All Aspects of Life, Death, and Destiny

I. Significance of Christ's Life and Death in Plan of Redemption

Before we turn to another related truth, likewise taught by Christ and centering in Him, let us note again the foundational principles and provisions of salvation in, and only in, Christ Jesus. This is essential to the balanced understanding of all special outworkings, manifestations, and teachings emanating from and centering in Him.

I. CHRIST—REVEALER OF GOD AND REDEEMER OF MAN.—Jesus Christ came as the revealer of God, and the redeemer of man from the power both of sin and of death. And both of these enemies He overcame in His own person, and made His victory effective for us through His triumphant resurrection, and thus brought "*life and immortality to light*," and made them operational "through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). That, in a word, is the tremendous scope—the height, depth, length, and breadth of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Sacrifice, Priest and Judge, and coming King.

We have already noted the foundational incarnation side. Now let us observe its outworking in Christ's atoning death. Christ's sinless life and vicarious atoning death met all the just and holy requirements of the divine law (Rom. 7:12), in order that divine love and grace might be poured forth freely, and reclaim and forgive sinful, dying man, and restore him both



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From Bethlehem's Manger, to the Temple Recognition, to His Inauguration as Messiah at His Baptism, Jesus Prepared for His Mission to Restore Life to Dying Men.

to holiness and to his forfeited life. In accomplishing this, Christ lived sinlessly and died voluntarily as our atoning Substitute. As another has impressively put it, He bore the full consequences of the sin in which He had no personal part, that we might share the full benefits of His triumph in which we had no personal part.

It was a case of complete substitution. It is therefore all of grace. And efficacious, atoning grace not only *accounts* righteous but actually *makes* righteous all who receive it, through *justification* and then *sanctification*. And these will be followed in turn by *glorification* at Christ's return. Such righteousness, it must be added, is the prerequisite for seeing God (Heb. 12:14) and dwelling in His presence forevermore. To provide these for man was the primary purpose first of Christ's incarnation and then specifically of His passion. That is the wonder of His love and the marvel of His grace. Let us now look at the death side more closely.

2. LIFE-GIVING SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S DEATH.—Christ's atoning death, with its vast significance, was



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Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ Was the Means Whereby Christ Took Our Place. His Resurrection Is the Assurance of Our Resurrection.

all foreordained, foretold, and then actualized in Christ. The fateful history of sin and death, and the antithetical righteousness and life, may be summarized thus, as attested in both Testaments. This is the Biblical foundation for our hope and confidence. Here is an epitome in six points:

(1) Christ is the source of all life (Job 12:9, 10; Ps. 36:9; 66:8, 9; Jer. 2:13; John 5:27; Acts 17:24, 25, 28).

(2) Life from God was imparted to man in the original creation (Gen. 2:7; Job 33:4; Isa. 45:12; Jer. 27:5).

(3) This life was forfeited through sin (Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Rom. 5:12, 15, A.R.V.).

(4) The Son of God has life in Himself, and came to bring that life back to lost man (John 1:4; 5:21, 25; 6:33, 47-51; 10:10, 27, 28; 14:6; 17:2; Rom. 6:23; Col. 3:4; 1 John 1:1-3).

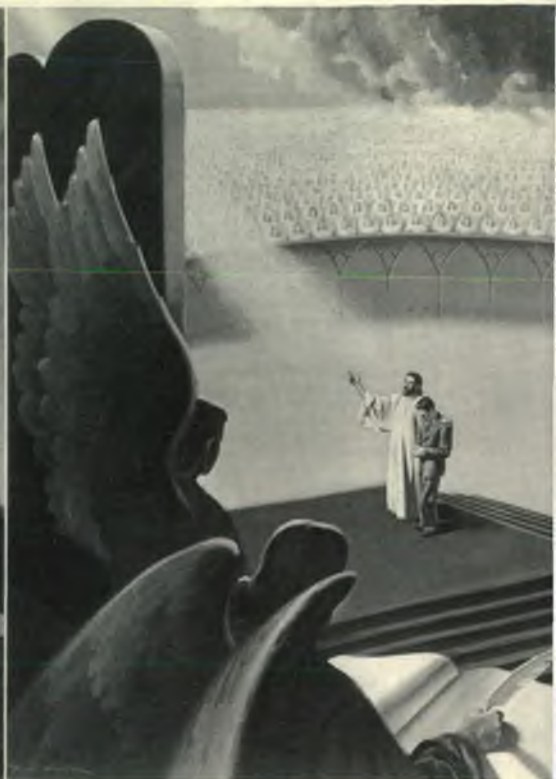
(5) This life is acquired by accepting and receiving the Son of God for all He offered Himself to be (John 3:15, 16, A.R.V.; 3:36; 4:14; 6:40; 20:31; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:1; 1 John 5:11-13).

(6) Every sinner who truly turns to Christ is thus saved from merited death—Christ dying in his stead (James 5:19, 20). And the repentant sinner is restored to life, and destined to receive glorious immortality at the resurrection or translation day.



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The Irrevocable Decisions of the Judgment Will Determine Every Individual's Future—Whether Eternal Life or Everlasting Death. And We Shall All Stand Before the Judgment Bar of Christ.



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Man, the Sinner, Does Not Face the Searching Judgment Alone. He Has an Advocate—the One Who Died to Redeem Him, Arose to Justify Him, and Ascended to Mediate for Him.

3. CHRIST'S DEATH SUMMIT OF SACRIFICE FOR MAN.—Note that death phase in greater depth. The laying down of His life, by Christ, was the consummating act in His transcendent self-sacrifice for man. This act of satisfaction and submission, in behalf of the race, to the full death penalty deserved by the race because of sin is truly unfathomable to the human mind. It scales the summit as well as plumbs the depths of divine love and grace. As to its central importance, 33 per cent of Matthew's Gospel is devoted to the record of the last week of Christ's life; of Mark's, 37 per cent; and of John's, 42 per cent. That is the proportionate emphasis given by Inspiration.

Let it never be forgotten that Christ did not choose between dying at one time rather than another, but instead, *between dying and not dying for man*. He died voluntarily, vicariously, and victoriously. He died to cancel the curse, to lift the ban, to bestow divine grace, to purchase pardon, to ransom sin's captives, to restore life—and to once and for all defeat and end Satan's malign work of rebellion, enslavement, and murder of the human race. Christ died as the representative of man—His death, as we have seen, being voluntary, vicarious, sinless, and sacrificial. It was purposeful, propitiatory, reconciliatory, once-for-all, and all-sufficient. It afforded *complete* atonement for all who will accept it, and thus come under the application of its provisions.

4. REJECTION OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE PROVISIONS SUPREME SIN.—In the light of all this, it therefore follows that, inasmuch as Christ is the supreme revelator, mediator, sole propitiator, and the reconciliator of God and man, the most fearful and fatal form of sin and rebellion is willful rejection of Christ as our atoning sacrifice, and of what He has done and what He offers Himself to be as the restorer of the lost *life*, and the sole giver of *Immortality*. The rejection of Christ and His teaching on this supreme provision of love is therefore the gravest of sins, and the rejector deserves and will experience everlasting death. That is the gravity of the ground we are traversing.

II. Pivotal Place of Christ's Teachings on Life, Death, and Destiny

Christ came both to restore obscured and lost truths and to enunciate new truths that confirmed, explained, expanded, and completed the original truths of the Old Testament—much of which concerned the origin, nature, and eternal destiny of man. These truths had first been enunciated after Creation and the Fall and were increasingly revealed during the patriarchal period. They were further developed during

the Mosaic dispensation, and continued to be clarified and unfolded during the period of the prophets.

But in the two centuries preceding the birth of Christ false philosophical teachings regarding man's essential nature and destiny made fatal inroads into large segments of Jewish thought. These Innate Immortality concepts came directly out of Greek paganism, as we shall see, through the channel of Platonic philosophy, and profoundly affected the Hebrew concept of man and his destiny and his relationship to God and immortality.

1. PROCLAMATION OF TRUTH AND CONFUTATION OF ERROR.

—Much of Christ's great mission was the proclamation of truth and the confutation of error concerning the basic relationships between God and man. And the truth He proclaimed was personalized and embodied in Himself. *He* was the predicted hope and Redeemer of Israel. *He* was the way, the truth, and pre-eminently the *life*. There was no other. *He* was the door of the sheepfold and the shepherd of *life*. *He* was the bread and the water of *life*. And significantly enough, He placed special emphasis during His incarnation on *life—eternal life, vested in Himself*—with immortality for man dependent upon the acceptance of Himself as atoning Saviour, transforming Life-giver, and immortal King of the coming age.

But the Jewish mind had become obsessed with the Platonic concept of the universal Innate Immortality of the soul, and the contingent and corresponding Eternal Torment of the incorrigibly wicked. So it was that Jesus, as we have seen, sought to correct these gross misconceptions and to point out the imperative necessity of man's acceptance of Him as the Life-giver.

Christ's death on the uplifted cross was the transcendent fulfillment of the Old Testament types of the Divine Substitute offered in the sinner's stead—dying that he might not die but have life. And Christ's triumphal resurrection was not only a vindication of His astonishing claims but the divine guarantee of the resurrection at the last day of all who believe in and re-



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The Glad Reunion as the Sleeping Saints Are Called Forth From Gravedom at the Second Advent and Its Attendant Resurrection. Families Are Forever Reunited.

ceive Him for what He offered Himself to be. That is man's only guarantee and security.

2. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING CONFLICTS OF CENTURIES.—Consequently, the mission of Christ on earth was tied in inextricably with the restoration of the truth and the divine provision of *assured eternal life now, vested in Christ, with actual and realized Immortality at the resurrection and Second Advent*. A realization of these sublime truths and provisions is essential to a recognition and understanding of the ceaseless conflict of the centuries over the nature and destiny of man—whether conditional or innate, contingent or natural—and of death as ultimate utter destruction, or eternal life in torment. That is the essence of the issue.

This constitutes the key that unlocks the most crucial controversies of the centuries concerning Hell, Purgatory, in-

dulgences, invocation of saints, spiritual resurrection, Universalism, Spiritualism, and kindred issues that have wracked the church across the centuries. That is why Christ's infallible testimony is not only ultimate but also indispensable in this field.

That is why we need to know not only His express teaching on *life* (already surveyed) but also His express teachings on the *first*, or natural, *death* as a sleep, with its inevitable resurrection awakening, and on the punishment of the wicked through utter destruction by means of the *second* death. Every major teaching of Christ is related to these basic considerations. His teaching on the "last things," for example, makes them luminous with new and larger meaning. To this we now turn.

III. Sets Pattern for Eschatological and Chronological Sequence

Let us now examine another related facet of our Lord's many-sided teaching emphasis. As would naturally be expected, Christ, the Supreme Preacher and Master Teacher of all time, set the eschatological pattern for all His followers to sense and follow. He presented the foundational truths of life, death, and destiny, not as isolated abstractions but always in their basic eschatological perspective and orderly sequence.

They were always set forth in vital relationship to the last things, the end events, the judgment scenes and finalities. They were ever presented in the light of the climactic Second Advent with its tremendous accompaniments—its final rewards and punishments, and its resurrection unto eternal life and happiness for the righteous and its resurrection unto damnation and utter destruction for the sinful rejectors of salvation and truth. In other words, the eschatological overtone could always be heard in His utterances. That was one of the distinguishing characteristics of His message to men.

More than that, Christ presented these end events as the culmination of the impelling sweep of the centuries. No events are merely isolated and unrelated. Christ outlined the over-all



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The Saved Will Welcome Christ With Unspeakable Joy; the Lost Will Face Him With Unutterable Anguish. To One, His Second Advent Brings Immortality; to the Other, Destruction.

life history and vicissitudes of the church He was founding, tracing its course clear across the Christian Era. But, to make the picture more comprehensive, He portrayed the church in the midst of the outer turbulence and oppressions of the nations and the world, along with her own inner departures from the faith.

And still more significant, He tied them in with the great



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Human Destiny, Pictured Through Prophetic Symbol, Is to Climax in Our Day. We Live in the Period of the Multikingdom Feet of Commingled Iron and Clay.

outline prophecies of Daniel (Matt. 24:15), that reach to the end of the age and the setting up of the kingdom of God, when the nations are to be overthrown by divine interposition at the end of the age. Such is the unity of the Old and the New Testament eschatology, brought into focus by Christ.

1. **PROPHETIC REPETITION FOR EMPHASIS AND AMPLIFICATION.**—True to the characteristic pattern of Bible prophecy, Christ thrice goes back over the Christian Era, and retraces in part, each time with increasing fullness and greater detail the closer He carries us, in His portrayal, to the end of the age and to His own second advent in power and glory, which will terminate the affairs of mankind. There were diversions, but there was an undeviating progression. The continuity is unmistakable.

However, Jesus left to John the revelator and to Paul and Peter and others the portrayal of the tremendous multiple events of the coming day of the Lord, which is introduced by the Advent—along with the accompanying conditions and contingent events of the subsequent millennial period, which follows the Second Advent and the cataclysmic end of the age. And all this is, in turn, succeeded by the oft-foretold establishment of the everlasting kingdom of righteousness, presented under the term the “new heavens and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1), to continue forevermore.

2. **REPETITION—CLEARLY ESTABLISHED PATTERN OF PROPHECY.**—It is generally recognized that Daniel the prophet presented four paralleling lines of prophecy, depicting different approaches and emphases, in his multiple comprehensive outline of the world history of the centuries. These are recorded in chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12—each in the series climaxing with the establishment of the kingdom of God. And in the Apocalypse, John the revelator likewise presents a series of paralleling prophecies covering the Christian Era—the seven churches, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the consecutive beasts of Revelation 12-14 and 17-19—each prophetic out-

line going back and repeating, and all ending at the Advent, prior to the unique period of the millennium, set forth in chapter 20.¹

Each and all are followed by the final destruction of sin and sinners, along with the author of sin, at the millennium's close. In the same way Christ, the fountainhead of prophecy, three times covers the Christian Era with cumulative force in His master prophecy of Matthew 24. His portrayal thus harmonizes with the characteristic pattern of all Bible prophecy.

This reiteration was all necessary to bring out and unmask the fatal penetration of apostasy from within, along with persecution from the nations from without, and the complex conflicts between the two, reaching their close only at the Second Advent and final disposition of all things. This multiple portrayal was necessary, in order comprehensively to compass it all—just as four Gospels were required in order adequately to portray the matchless single life of Christ. This master prophecy is all presented in Matthew 24, and the paralleling recitals recorded in Mark 13 and Luke 21.

3. FIRST COVERAGE LEADS UP TO THE "END."—The first coverage of the Christian Era appears in verses 3-14 of Matthew 24. Beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70, Christ carries us through the early period of the appearance of "false Christs" and their deceptions, and the "wars and rumours of wars" that were to characterize the breakup of the Roman Empire, and then into the Middle Ages. Christ here adds this cautionary note, "These things [that He had just depicted, up to this point] must come to pass, but *the end is not yet*" (v. 6).

Next He portrays the subsequent wars, uprisings, famines, pestilences, and the dreadful betrayals and religious persecutions that would mark the subsequent centuries. Then comes another outbreak of false prophets and deceivers. But now He reaches the significant time when some would "endure *unto*

¹ Comprehensively covered in L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vols. 1-4.

the end," and be saved. The "end" is now *near*. And finally comes the "end," ushered in with this identifying feature: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then shall the end come*" (v. 14).

That is the supreme sign of the "last days," or "time of the end."

4. SECOND COVERAGE LIKEWISE LEADS TO ADVENT.—Christ then reverts to the time of Daniel's prophecy of the great "tribulation," under the gross ecclesiastical apostasy of the Middle Ages and subsequent centuries. So devastating was its decimation that the days of religious persecution had to be "shortened," else no flesh would be saved (v. 22). Next comes the final irruption of false christs and false prophets, and another attempt to deceive the very elect. But none need be deceived by sensational claims of Christ's coming in the "desert" or in the "secret chambers" (through the latter-day phenomena of Spiritualism). Thus the *second* time Jesus leads up to the "end," and the Second Advent. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (v. 27).

5. CELESTIAL SIGNS ARE CHRONOLOGICALLY PLACED.—Finally, in the third recapitulation, Christ presents a series of unconcealable celestial signs that would slightly precede His actual advent. He places the first of these chronologically just after the terrible "tribulation" part of "those days" (near the close of the fateful 1260 years of Daniel 7, extending from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798),² as He declares:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days [ending mid-eighteenth century] shall the sun be darkened [May 19, 1780], and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven [Nov. 13, 1833],³ and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29, 30).

² See L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vols. 1-4, for documented evidence.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, chap. 13, app. H.

Thus we are brought up the third time to the climactic "end" and Advent when "he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (v. 31).

And that gathering of the elect is by means of the resurrection of the righteous from among the dead and by the translation of the living righteous. Hence this over-all portrayal is tied in inextricably with our theme and quest, and deals with the final, eternal destiny of all men.

6. "HOUR" NOT KNOWN, IMMINENCE CAN BE KNOWN.—As a reinforcing postscript Christ tells how, in the closing days before His coming, conditions similar to those preceding the Flood will be repeated, with its sudden, unexpected, universal destruction:

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (vs. 37-39).

But "no man" will know beforehand the "hour" or precise time of Christ's coming—not even the angels (v. 36). But all men can know when it is near (vs. 37-44). That is why Christ gave this chronological outline prophecy—to disclose the proximity, so men can prepare for the coming event. Nevertheless, the "hour" will come as an unexpected surprise, when the "Son of man cometh" (vs. 44, 50). Especially searching is Christ's denunciation of those appointed as spiritual guardians and teachers in the church, who will nevertheless be unaware of the proximity of the time and the certainty and the crucial outcome of the impending Advent. Such, our Lord solemnly says, shall be cut off, or cut asunder, amid "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (v. 51). Here again is disclosed the fate of the wicked and the doom of the hypocrite.

That, in brief, is the Master's great eschatological prophecy of the Christian Era and the consummating end of the age. It is the "Master Outline of the Centuries" of the Christian Era.

There is nothing comparable to it in the Word. It is the foundation portrayal for the diversified but eventful details added by Paul, Peter, John, and others, who wrote under inspiration, and in conformity therewith, as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

IV. Transcendent Events Mark "End of the World"

1. PREPARATORY EVENTS, COMING IN GLORY, FINAL SEPARATIONS.—As we have just seen, in discussing His second coming and the "end of the world" (Matt. 24:3), Christ tells of identifying preparatory events and movements to take place in the last days, and declares, "Then shall the end come" (v. 14)—not simply the ending of an expiring state but really the beginning of a new and perfect state. That is highly significant.

It is in this connection that Christ says:

"And then shall appear the *sign of the Son of man in heaven*: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*" (v. 30).

As we have seen, that involves and necessitates separation of the good from the evil, among the living as well as the dead. Here is the inspired portrayal:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, *then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory*: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and *he shall separate them* [*autous*, masc., individuals, not *ethnē*, neut., nations] *one from another*, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:31, 32).

Then Christ depicts the purpose of the final separation:

"Then shall he [the "Son of man"] say also unto them on the *left hand*, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels" (v. 41).

"And these [the wicked] shall go away into *everlasting punishment*: but the righteous into *life eternal*" (v. 46).

Such are the events that follow the ripened "harvest" at the world's end. "When the fruit is brought forth, immedi-



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Separation of the Wheat and Tares—the Tares for Burning and the Wheat for the Granary—Symbolic of the Contrasting Destinies of the Two Classes, With Ultimate Destruction of the Wicked.

ately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come” (Mark 4:29).

This compasses the final destiny of all mankind.

2. “WHEAT” INTO GOD’S GARNER; “TARES” INTO FIRE. —In His paralleling parable of the tares, Christ elaborates and defines His terms: “The *harvest* is the end of the world; and the *reapers* are the angels” (Matt. 13:39).

And the twofold result of the reaping is this:

“Let both [the wheat and the tares—vs. 24, 25] grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers [angels], Gather ye together first the tares, and *bind them in bundles to burn* them: but *gather the wheat into my barn*” (v. 30).

And the Master’s inerrant “end of the world” explanation is this:

“The harvest is the *end of the world*;⁴ and the *reapers* are the angels. As therefore the *tares* [“*children of the wicked one*”—v. 38] are *gathered*

⁴ The Old Testament portrayal of the harvest, in Joel 3, is in connection with the retributive scenes of the “day of the Lord”: “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe:

and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (vs. 39-43).

Such are the opposite eternal destinies of the two groups. And that stupendous reaping time predicted by Christ is portrayed in actual fulfillment in Revelation 14.

V. Apostles' Descriptions Agree With Christ's

The basic harmony between Christ's eschatology and that pictured by Paul and John is impressive. In His prophetic discourse of Matthew 24, answering the disciples' inquiry as to "the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world" (Matt. 24:3), Christ leads His listeners up to His "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (v. 30), and declares:

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect [*eklektous*, chosen] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:31).

I. SECOND ADVENT USHERS IN "DAY OF THE LORD."—And now observe how Paul's description agrees with that of Christ:

"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 not prevent [*phthanō*, "to precede"] them which are 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).

And this is presented by Paul in immediate connection with the transcendent scenes of the "day of the Lord."

come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision ["threshing" (margin, or judgment)]: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (vs. 13, 14).

"The *day of the Lord* so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they [the wicked] shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden *destruction* cometh upon them, . . . and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:2, 3).

2. SECOND ADVENT IS DAY OF SEPARATION.—Christ further describes the momentous events at His coming in these words in the parable of the talents. Note them again in greater detail:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall *separate* them one from another, as a shepherd *divideth* his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. 25:31-33).

And the King's sentence from the throne, to those on His left, will be:

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting fire* [*to pur to aiōnion*, age-lasting fire], prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*: but the righteous into *life eternal*" (vs. 41, 46).

But mark that "everlasting punishment" is not everlasting punishing, but is eternal in results, and is analogous to the "eternal judgment" of Hebrews 6:2 (not eternal judging), "eternal redemption" of Hebrews 9:12 (not eternal redeeming), "eternal salvation" of Hebrews 5:9 (not eternal saving). That is, *it is the eternal effect of an act*. The act here in Matthew 25:46 is an act of *punishment*, as in Matthew 3:12, where "he will *burn up* [*katakausei*, "consume entirely"] the chaff with unquenchable fire."

3. ETERNAL RESULTS OF FINAL REAPING.—The harvest, or reaping time, tersely pictured by Christ, is portrayed in full by John in Revelation 14. Note it:

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the *harvest* of the earth is *ripe*. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another

angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are *fully ripe*. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:14-19).

First, the second advent of the Son of man is pictured, then the garnering, or gathering, of the ripened harvest of the golden grain of earth. Finally comes the climax—the gathering of the ripened clusters of grapes of wrath for casting into the "great winepress of the wrath of God" (v. 19). Thus are the transactions of the great "*day of the Lord*" portrayed by John.

There are consequently two distinct developments, or phases: *First*, the gathering of the *righteous*, represented by the fully ripened grain; and *second*, the gathering up of the *wicked*, as fully ripe grapes, which are cast into the wine press of the fury of His wrath. Thus they are brought to an utter end. That is John's elaboration of Jesus' basic prophecy.

Now let us turn to Christ's portrayal of man's condition in death, pictured as a "sleep." In this He is strongly buttressed by Paul.

VI. "Sleep" of Death Followed by Resurrection "Awakening"

Jesus and then Paul are the principal New Testament witnesses to the truth that the "sleep" of the "first" death embraces *both* saints and sinners, and is an *unbroken slumber* until the resurrection morn, when the sleeping *saints* will awaken to the call of the Life-giver. The Biblical concept of unbroken rest, or sleep, accentuates the necessity of the Second Advent and its concurrent resurrection. Holy Writ repeatedly declares death to be an unbroken sleep, from which none will awake until Jesus comes to summon forth the righteous dead. It was because of this that the Second Advent was the radiant hope of the Early Church, the goal of all holy expectation.

We repeat, the *first* death, as a "sleep," comes upon all men

alike, irrespective of character, whereas the "second death" is the retributive punishment for willful, unrepented sin, and is executed only after the due determination of the judgment. And it is also to be remembered that the awakening of the *sinner* for that retribution comes a thousand years *after* that of the righteous—in other words, at the *close* of the millennium, instead of at the beginning. They are not synchronous or simultaneous.

1. CHRIST AND PAUL BOTH EMPLOY METAPHOR OF SLEEP.—As we have seen, Jesus spoke definitively of death as a "sleep." Thus:

"Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth* [*koimaō*, "to lie down in sleep"]; but I go, that I may *awake* [*exupnizo*, arouse] him out of sleep. . . . Howbeit Jesus spake of his death" (John 11:11-13).

The two expressions, sleeping and awakening, thus stand out in logical antithesis. On another occasion Jesus said, "The maid is not dead [in the sense of being beyond the summons of the Life-giver], but *sleepeth*" (Matt. 9:24). And the record adds, then "he . . . took her by the hand, and the maid arose" (v. 25). In this connection it is interesting to note that our English word "cemetery" comes from the Greek *koimētērion*, a sleeping chamber or burial place (from *koimaō*, to put to sleep). Paul likewise uses the same metaphor of "sleep" with telling force:

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. . . . Then they also which are *fallen asleep* [*keomaomai*, to fall asleep involuntarily] *in Christ* are perished. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that *slept*" (1 Cor. 15:17-20).

In John 12:1, 9, 17 the variant verb *egeirō*⁵ (to rouse from sleep, to raise) is used by John in referring to the "raising" of Lazarus.

Anastasis is one of the most common Greek terms for "resurrection." It was often used by Christ, as in discussing the resur-

⁵ According to *Companion Bible*, of the 141 uses of *egeirō* (to awaken, wake up, arouse from sleep) 70 usages refer to the resurrection. (For example: Matt. 10:8; 27:63, 64; Luke 20:37; 24:10, 34; John 12:1, 9, 17; Eph. 1:20; 5:14, et cetera.)

rection with the unbelieving Sadducees (Matt. 22:23, 28, 30, 31), and in referring to the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). It was likewise used by the apostles in referring to Christ's own resurrection (Matt. 27:53; Acts 1:22; 2:31; etc.), and by Paul in the great resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15:12, 13, 21, 42), as well as by Peter (1 Peter 1:3).

The noun *anastasis* (a standing up, as from the dead; hence, resurrection), occurring 42 times, is always translated "resurrection," except in Luke 2:34. The verb *anistēmi* occurs 111 times, 35 of which refer to resurrection. (For example: Matt. 17:9; 20:19; John 6:39, 40, 44, 54.)

2. NO CONSCIOUS LAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN DEATH AND RESURRECTION.—Death as a deep unbroken sleep is the inspired depiction, enshrining a wondrous and blessed truth. For the sleeper himself there is no perceptible interval, no conscious lapse of time, between the moment of falling asleep in death and the instant of awakening, or resurrection. The closing of the eyes in the death slumber is succeeded immediately, as far as he is concerned, by the hearing of the sound of the last trump and the awakening call of Christ on the resurrection morn. Thus the passage of time is annihilated. It is more rapid than the lightning's flash across the sky. It will be like the "twinkling of an eye."

It cannot be overstressed that there is complete unconsciousness during the entire interval. The saints are not in Heaven, but in gravedom. Though thousands of years should elapse—as with righteous Abel (Heb. 11:4)—there is no wearisome, frustrating passage of time. A long or a short period is identically the same to the one who is insensible. The moment of loss of consciousness is, to him, immediately followed, the next moment, by the regaining of consciousness, only now with the body in glorified, immortalized form (1 Cor. 15:52-54). In the light of this comforting fact of the sleep of the saints, *the second coming of Christ is as near to every individual in the embrace of death, and to every generation, as to any and all others.* That should never be forgotten.

3. PREMISE OF "SLEEP" ONLY WAY OF UNDERSTANDING PAUL.—Paul, in comforting the Thessalonians, along with all other Christians, always speaks of the dead as sleeping, and holds out the assurance of glorious final awakening, or resurrection. Indeed, the only way the apostle can be understood in all of his many statements is on the premise of a state of sleep between death and the resurrection. And as in natural sleep there is suspension of the senses, so in death there is cessation of all the functions of life.

We therefore believe it to be clearly established that the state of death is, in the New Testament, set forth as one of unconscious sleep between death and the resurrection—that unconsciousness continuing until the actual moment of awakening, which is the resurrection. Hence the Greek verb *egeirō*, we repeat, commonly rendered "to raise," may, when used in the context of those who have died, be properly translated "to awake," "arouse," "rouse up." This is strikingly set forth in 1 Corinthians 15, the great resurrection classic, where the "waking" is frequently placed close beside the "sleeping" expressions of death. Thus:

"That Christ died for our sins . . . ; and that he was buried, and that he *rose* [*egeirō*, "hath been raised," or "awakened"] again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are *fallen asleep* [*koimaō*]" (1 Cor. 15:3-6).

And now read verses 12-18, and 20, where *egeirō* may be uniformly rendered "awakened," and is, in fact, the alternative reading in various translations:

"Now if Christ be preached that he *rose* [*egeirō*, "awakened"] from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of [from among] the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not *risen* [*awakened*]: and if Christ be not *risen* [*awakened*], then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he *raised up* [*awakened*] Christ: whom he raised [*awakened*] not up, if so be that the dead *rise* [*wake*] not. For if the dead rise [*wake*] not, then is not Christ *raised* [*awakened*]: and if Christ be not *raised*, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which

are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished* [from which there is no awakening]. . . . But now is Christ *risen* [awakened] from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept [or, have fallen asleep, from *koimaō*]” (vs. 12-20).

Awakening is clearly the converse of falling asleep.

4. SLEEPING DEAD DO NOT PRECEDE THE LIVING.—Another point should be noted. 1 Thessalonians 4:15—“We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not *prevent* [anticipate, precede, or go before] them which are asleep”—assures us that those who are still living and remain at the coming of the Lord shall not precede those who “are asleep” in death. Obviously Paul is *not* saying, “before those who have been before us in glory for centuries.”

Neither the “*quick*” (living) nor the “*dead*” (sleeping) shall precede or be gathered, before the other. But the changed living and the awakened “sleepers,” both immortalized at one and the same time, “shall be caught up together,” to “meet the Lord in the air,” thenceforth ever to be “with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

5. INTENT OF THE “QUICK” AND THE “DEAD.”—It should be added that the term “quick” appears thrice:

Acts 10:42—Christ was “ordained of God to be the Judge of *quick* [*zōnton*, “the living,” from *zōō*, “to have life”] and *dead* [*nekrōn*,⁶ persons once living but alive no longer].”

2 Tim. 4:1—“the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the *quick* and the *dead*.”

1 Peter 4:5—“him that is ready to judge the *quick* and the *dead*.”

No passage of Scripture employing this metaphor of sleep says that it is merely the body, or any single part of man, that sleeps, but always the person himself—the man as a *man*, or personality (see Job 7:21; Deut. 31:16). Thus Jesus said, “Our friend *Lazarus* sleepeth.” And Paul declares, “Then *they* also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” It is the *dead* who sleep, not simply their corpses.

⁶ *Nekros* denotes the *person* who was once living but who is alive no longer, that is, *dead persons* as distinct from merely dead bodies. (See Matt. 22:32; Acts 26:23; 1 Cor. 15:12, 13, 15, 16; Heb. 13:20.)



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REVIEW PICTURES

Christ, the Life-giver, Raises the Daughter of Jairus—a Token of His Power and Purpose to Resurrect the Redeemed at His Coming.

VII. The Resurrection Provision Pivotal in Christ's Teaching

In both the private and the public teaching of Jesus the resurrection was set forth as pivotal—both for Himself and for His followers, with the latter contingent upon the former. More than that, the resurrection of *all* who have died is emphasized. But there are *two* resurrections, Jesus declared—that of the “good,” unto “life”; and that of the “evil,” unto damnation” (John 5:29). *All* the dead will hear the resurrection call of our Lord (v. 25). Thus, “*All* that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth” (vs. 28, 29). And *all* will come forth (1 Cor. 15:22) as surely as *all* men die the first, or natural, death. The determination of which resurrection—that of the “just” or the “unjust”—is conditional, just as immortality is conditional. But not the fact and certainty of a resurrection; that is absolute and universal.

1. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PREREQUISITE TO OURS.—Resurrection was necessary for Jesus Christ. If He had remained the

prey of death, He could not have opened the way to immortality for man, and the plan of redemption would have been aborted. Moreover, Christ's resurrection was a bodily resurrection, just as is to be that of His faithful followers. It was actual, and real—albeit a glorified, spiritual body. When the disciples saw Christ after His resurrection, the record is:

“They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a *spirit* [*pneuma*, here “a spirit being”]” (Luke 24:37).

But Jesus said:

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a *spirit* [*pneuma*] hath not flesh and bones [“body,” v. 3], as ye see me have” (v. 39).

It is only the risen and living Saviour who can and will raise to eternal life all who have become united to Him by faith (1 Cor. 15:42-44; Phil. 3:21). Indeed, He declares from Heaven:

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of *hell* [*hadēs*, the grave] and of death” (Rev. 1:18).

These keys He will use on the resurrection morn. Our sole hope of immortality is bound up with this supernatural, consummating act of resurrection. There is no immortality apart from the resurrection assured by Christ's resurrection, and bestowed upon us at the time of Christ's return (1 Cor. 15:52, 53). Clearly, then, the safety and assurance of those who are “in Christ” is bound up with the resurrection as the consummation of life, and the sole exit from death and the grave.

“This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:39; cf. v. 40; chaps. 11:25; 14:6; Col. 3:4).

2. RESURRECTION IS OF THE WHOLE PERSON.—Jesus left to Paul and to John the unfolding and development of many great truths centering in and about the resurrection. But He laid the complete groundwork therefor, and established the certainty. He declared the truth that the resurrection is a bod-

ily resurrection. The definition and the nature and the actuality are fixed by Christ's own resurrection. It cannot signify one thing for Christ and another thing totally different for us.

Both Old and New Testaments alike speak of the *person* as being buried. "*David . . . is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day*" (Acts 2:29). Said the angels at Christ's tomb, "Come, see the place where *the Lord lay*" (Matt. 28:6). The *Lord Himself* lay there until the moment of resurrection. They laid *Jesus* in the tomb. They "took *him* down, and wrapped *him* in the linen, and laid *him* in a sepulchre" (Mark 15:46). "There they laid *Jesus*" (John 19:42). *Jesus* was in the grave.

3. CERTITUDE OF RESURRECTION RESTS ON CHRIST'S INFAL-LIBLE WORD.—Jesus predicted not only His own death on the cross but His triumphant resurrection from the dead, His return to His Father, and His coming again for His followers, that they might be with Him forevermore (John 14:3). Declaring Himself to be "the way, the truth, and *the life*" (v. 6), and repeating His prediction, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (v. 3), He added, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (v. 19). He likewise said:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die [the *second* death]" (John 11:25, 26).

The *second* death is the only real death, eternal death, from which there is no awakening. The *first* death is but a sleep, from which there is a certain and a universal awakening.

Again and again Jesus says of all who believe on the Son that they may have "everlasting life" now, in Christ, and three times asserts, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6: 40). So the certitude of the resurrection rests upon the formal and inviolable promise of the Son of God:

"This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and *I will raise him up at the last day*" (John 6:40).

His resurrection becomes the unbreakable pledge of our own. If Christ was not raised, there would be nothing to guarantee a life beyond the grave (1 Cor. 15:13-23). Buried in the profound slumber of *she'ól* (or *hadēs*), the saints would never awaken from that heavy sleep, apart from the resurrection.

4. NOT UNINTERRUPTED SURVIVAL BUT RESURRECTION.—
Let there be no confusion, then, over the issue of uninterrupted survival.

“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 [*Gehenna*]” (Matt. 10:28).

This categorical statement, that God is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, rules out the thesis of innate indestructibility or indefeasible immortality of man. Though one be slain by human hands, God will raise him up, soul and body, at the resurrection day. This was the argument that Christ used to silence the Sadducees—not the uninterrupted survival of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but *resurrection* (Luke 20:37, 38). So the *resurrection* is the second of the two fundamental truths of the gospel—next to, following upon, and joined inseparably to, the atoning *death* of Christ.

Christ's Great Parable of the Lost Opportunity

I. Problem Text (Luke 16:19-31): Parable-Fable of Dives and Lazarus

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is often cited as the chief cornerstone in support of the postulate of man's inherent immortality and the endless duration of the incorrigibly wicked in sin and misery. It is frequently invoked to silence all dissent or question as to Immortal-Soulism. It is persistently set forth as proving beyond all peradventure that the souls of both the godly and the ungodly continue to live on uninterruptedly after death, *separate from the body*—but which, as we shall presently see, is simply Plato's contention that death is identical with life, only in another sphere. This Platonic concept presents retribution as beginning immediately upon entering the state of death.

The parable depicts Lazarus as already safely in "Abraham's bosom," and Dives as already suffering the tormenting flames of "hell"—and all this *before* the resurrection, and *prior* to the judgment. It is alleged that the portrayal establishes three things: (1) That the dead are all keenly conscious; (2) that the souls of all men are immortal; and (3) that upon leaving this world all men go at once either into a state of blessed joy forever or to unchangeable Eternal Torment. That is the common contention based on this passage.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is the only passage in the New Testament in which a person, said to be in *hadēs*,



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In Public Teaching, in Healing the Sick of Body and Soul, and in Personal Counseling
Christ Set Forth the Way of Life He Came to Restore.

is supposedly suffering the torments of the eternal flames of Hell. That in itself is so startling as to warrant special care in checking the recital from all angles. Is this an exception to the general rule? Does this constitute determining evidence? The case necessitates careful investigation, not only of all key expressions of the text, in their context, but of ascertaining contemporary backgrounds and side lights that have a bearing thereon.

1. CLEARLY ONE OF CHRIST'S MANY PARABLES.—To begin with, Christ uttered some forty or fifty major parables to illustrate God's mercy and justice, the plan of salvation, the reception or rejection of truth, the transformation of character, prayer, humility, the utilizing of present opportunities, relation to fellow men, His own return, the final judgment, and eternal reward—and especially the kingdom of Heaven. It was His characteristic form of teaching in the latter part of His ministry. That the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable has been widely recognized across the centuries. But not by all.



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The Parable-Fable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Appearing in a Sequence of Parables, Taught a Vital Spiritual Truth Concerning This Life, Not Historical Events of Life After Death.

While Jesus usually introduces His parables by saying they are parables (or likening them to “such-and-such”), He does not always do so. For example, there is the universally recognized parable of the prodigal son, in the preceding chapter of Luke’s Gospel, introduced by the phrase, “A *certain* man . . .” (Luke 15:11-32). This is followed, in chapter 16, by the parable of the unjust steward, which likewise begins with “There was a *certain rich man* . . .” (chap. 16:1-13).

Even on the basis of such an identical beginning, in this next recital of the rich man and Lazarus—“There was a *certain*

rich man . . ." (vs. 19-31)—we might make bold to say that in such a sequence this story would likewise logically be a parable, unless proof were forthcoming to the contrary. All three are recorded in succession by the same writer (Luke), and he is obviously using the same expression in the same parabolic sense.

2. **UTTERED WHEN JEWS DERIDED HIS TEACHINGS.**—As noted, Jesus had just presented the parable of the unjust steward (v. 12), as stressing the principle that the use of present opportunities determines future destiny. Christ was not condoning the unethical schemes of the unjust steward, only emphasizing his foresight and applying the principle of preparation for the life to come. But the Pharisees had refused to accept His teachings. Now He presses the point that *man's future destiny is settled forever in this present life*. But "the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him" (v. 14).

But because they openly scoffed at Him, Christ gives them a parable based on one of their own well-known beliefs. Many expositors believe that, for one thing, it was designed to show to the proud, self-righteous Pharisees, to whom high religious privileges had been accorded, how completely their condition and that of the despised Gentiles would later be reversed. The rich man of the narrative erred in thinking that salvation is based on Abrahamic descent rather than on character. Understood in this light, it will be seen to be strikingly prophetic—fulfilled to the very letter. But the lesson is deeper and very important. Let us first search into Christ's extensive and intensive use of parables.

II. Significant Place of Parables in Christ's Teaching

1. "PARABLE" AND "FABLE," DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS.—The line of demarcation between *parable*, simile, metaphor, legend, folklore, and *fable* cannot always be sharply drawn. Often they merge and blend. A *parable* is a figurative

illustration, an extended proverb or metaphor. It is more than a *similitude* (in which two things are compared), or a *metaphor* (suggesting a likeness or comparison). It is a word picture, an illuminating story.

Technically, a parable signifies a complete and often imaginary story from which a moral or lesson is to be drawn. Etymologically, a parable (*parabolē*, "a placing alongside") signifies the placing of two or more objects, or events, or circumstances alongside each other for the sake of comparison, and to illustrate and inculcate some moral lesson or higher spiritual truth. Parables are often based on folklore, or fables. And in this case of Dives and Lazarus, it is a trenchant story, based on contemporary Jewish belief and employed by Christ to admonish and rebuke the smugness of the Pharisees.

Christ's parables deal with the majesty of truth. Our Lord used parables to unfold great verities, placing a simple story "alongside," to illuminate a profound truth. But that truth conformed to fact and reality and to Scriptures, though not always to all aspects of the illustration that was employed. Beneath the outward form, or framework, is always to be found the inward meaning; beneath the visible, the invisible; beneath the temporal and passing is the eternal and abiding.

The intended meaning is not always expressed in the words used, but becomes clear by the intent of the comparison. A parable, therefore, conceals from one group what it reveals to another, as will later be noted. Parables must be rightly interpreted, or erroneous conclusions will be drawn.

A *fable*, or apologue, is likewise a fictitious narrative—a legend, myth, or bit of folklore—similarly designed to enforce some wholesome truth. But it is usually a story in which unusual actions are ascribed to animate or inanimate objects—and which could not actually happen—but which nevertheless reflect a helpful truth or principle. A fable builds the case in point upon an artificial setting—and, as noted, one *in which it could not actually happen*. Consequently its design and meaning are often the more easily discerned.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus was not specifically called a parable, evidently because it was really a parabolic fable based on contemporary Pharisaic tradition, but brought over into Jewish usage, according to Bishop Joseph Lightfoot, from pagan backgrounds.¹ It is obviously a blending of parable and fable—the truth of the teaching not being in the precise words or setting employed but in the designated lesson of the comparison.

With this as a setting, let us turn to Christ's parables in general. These were spoken with such frequency that Matthew wrote, "Without a parable spake he not unto them" (Matt. 13:34).

2. PARABOLIC METHOD ADOPTED TO CIRCUMVENT PREJUDICE.—At the outset of His ministry Christ used direct teaching methods and plain-spoken discourses. He uttered beatitudes, sayings, laws, promises, prophecies, and similitudes that explained themselves. He thus began the proclamation of His gospel message. But a change came after His first year of direct teaching, which was met with scorn, unbelief, and rising resistance. He then began to adopt the parabolic form of teaching, which had been in vogue for a century or so among Jewish teachers.

This astonished His disciples, as He changed from proclaiming the kingdom of Heaven in His former fashion. But He continued to employ, increasingly, the familiar form of rabbinic teaching—parables and "dark sayings," such as they had reserved for their own chosen disciples.

Christ evidently chose this medium because the Jews were spiritually blind and deaf (Matt. 13:10-13), and had now braced themselves against His direct teachings. There was a penal element in this. The Jews had set themselves against the light, or truth, as it was in Jesus. Therefore it was hidden in forms not easy for His antagonists to recognize. He deliberately withdrew light from those who "loved darkness rather

¹ J. B. Lightfoot, *Works*, vol. 12, pp. 159-168.

than light" (John 3:19, 20; 1:5; 12:35, 36). And the Platonic concept of the soul was now one of their cherished positions, molding their thinking.

Thus it was that truth was protected from the mockery of the scoffer. But the genuine seekers for truth asked the meaning of His parables, and the Master Teacher explained them step by step until they understood them. Thus truth was advanced despite the untoward circumstances. The underlying laws and principles governing parables were a sufficient safeguard against misunderstanding in their day. And they should be in ours. The disciples understood the Master's teachings on death and destiny, which ran counter to those of the Pharisees. They were aware of the sharp divergence.

So it was that the parable searched out the sincere hearers and led them on into the increasing light of truth. Christ's objective was unchanged, but His mode of communicating truth was altered to meet the changed conditions. Truth was now wrapped in a parabolic veil. In this way He surmounted the barricade of prejudice, reached the honest in heart, and instructed His circle of disciples. More than that, Christ was speaking for all classes and conditions to the end of time. Such was the paramount place of the parable in the climactic period of our Lord's ministry.

3. REVEALED TO DISCIPLES; CONCEALED FROM HOSTILE JEWS.—As stated, by the second year of Christ's ministry, the leaders and the bulk of the people had refused to accept Him for what He offered Himself to be—the Way, the Truth, and the *Life*. Christ then directed His teaching increasingly to His followers, and in so doing adopted the parabolic form of presentation, and became the supreme Teacher by the parabolic method. The purpose was obviously both to *reveal* to His disciples and to *conceal* from the hostile Jews. Here are Christ's words to the twelve after He had uttered the parable of the sower:

"And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not

see, and hearing they might not understand" (Luke 8:10; cf. Matt. 13: 11-17; Mark 4:9-12).

It is therefore established that Christ adopted a method of teaching truth that concealed it from those unwilling to be molded by it. And in this method it is not the circumstantial setting or staging of the parable that is significant, but the higher spiritual lesson springing therefrom, which constitutes its essence. For this we must watch in the parable we are about to survey. But first note another angle.

4. NUMBER AND SCOPE OF CHRIST'S PARABLES.—As to the number and scope of Christ's parables, Adam Fahling, in his *Harmony of the Gospels* (page 228), lists fifty-six parables uttered by our Lord. Others—such as Orville Nave, in his *Topical Bible*—tabulating only the major ones, list but thirty or forty. Some say seventy or more. But there is actually no conflict. The variation simply depends upon whether minor instances are included. And the distribution is interesting. They are confined to the three synoptic Gospels, with Matthew (32), Mark (14), and Luke (36). Next note another factor that is vital in our quest.

5. PARABLES NOT A SOUND BASIS FOR DOCTRINE.—For centuries hundreds of the most discerning scholars have recognized that parables, although rich in spiritual truth, do not form a proper basis for doctrinal faith or argument, because of their circumstantial settings and indirect character. The Latin expression, *Omnia similia claudicunt* ("All comparisons limp"), is applicable to parables. We repeat, No point of doctrine can safely be established on figurative passages of Scripture. Its doctrinal value lies only in its accordance with the nonfigurative declaration of Scripture, clearly expressed elsewhere.² That is particularly true of this parable. Bloomfield declares that "the best commentators, both ancient and modern, with reason consider it a parable."

Accordingly, scholarly Dr. Alfred Edersheim, in *Life and*

² See R. C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*; cf. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*.

Times of Jesus the Messiah, wisely says that doctrine cannot be derived from this parable (the rich man and Lazarus), concerning either the other world or the character or duration of future punishments, or the moral improvement of those in Gehenna. Prebendary Henry Constable calls such a position the "general sentiment of Christians." And Dr. William Smith insists: "It is impossible to ground the proof of an important theological doctrine on a passage which confessedly abounds in Jewish metaphor."³

But, it is to be observed, if this passage is conceded to be but a parable, then it clearly cannot be used to prove the eternal conscious torment of the wicked, for, as noted, no doctrine can safely be built upon, or buttressed by, a parable or allegory—especially when it squarely confutes the plain and uniform teaching of Scripture.

III. Doctrinal Dogmas of Pharisees in Time of Christ

1. PLATONIC POSTULATES EMBRACED BY TIME OF CHRIST.—Before we proceed to the parable, let us observe that this narrative was addressed to the Pharisees in particular, who were by now fully committed to the twin Platonic postulates of the immortality of the soul and the Eternal Torment of the wicked. The acceptance of these dual principles of Platonic philosophy and the consequent revolution in the theology of the Pharisees had transformed *she'ól* (and *hadēs*, its Greek equivalent) into an animated abode of disembodied spirits. It was now accepted as a place of throbbing *life*, instead of sterile *death*. And along with this, two characteristic terms used by the Pharisees—"Abraham's bosom" and "Paradise"—were now tied into this Platonic picture.

Under the insidious inroads of Platonism such Jews had become declared *Immortal-Soulists*, as seen in several of the inter-Testamental apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books, and pre-eminently in Philo of Alexandria. (See pp. 718-740.)

³ William Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 1038.

But neither the Old nor the New Testament ever speaks of *she'ól* (or *hadēs*) as a realm of life. Only in the poetical imagery of Isaiah 14 in the Old Testament as clearly stated, and here in this parable of the rich man and Lazarus in the New, are those committed to *she'ól*, or *hadēs*, said to perform the acts of the living. And by this time there was grave confusion over the distinctions between Hades and Gehenna. Such was the contemporary setting for the parable.

Christ was not, it should be added, necessarily supporting the pagan concept of death as life, that had now corrupted the Jewish faith. He was simply using a current concept to instill a totally different spiritual lesson.

2. PARALLELING ALLEGORIES IN OT IMAGERY.—It should also be noted that the nearest Old Testament parallel to the Dives-Lazarus parable is the parabolic imagery of Isaiah 14:4-11, which represents dead kings, though actually in their graves, as rising up and sitting on thrones in *she'ól*. They were there portrayed as conversing and rejoicing over the downfall of Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonian conqueror who had put them to death, and was then on his way to take his throne among them in the nether regions. (See pp. 170, 171.)

Then there was Jotham's parabolic story of the trees, the vine, and the bramble engaging in animated discussion (Judges 9:8-16; 2 Kings 14:9)—but never, of course, taking place in reality. It was purely and clearly figurative—a fictional narrative. As someone has phrased it, it presented a "substantial truth" in the framework of "circumstantial fiction." So there is no determinative help from the Old Testament. Here, in the parable of Luke 16:19-31, the unconscious dead are represented as carrying on a conversation—but *without necessarily involving the actual consciousness of the dead*, according to Old Testament precedent.

3. NOT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BUT PARABOLIC FABLE.—This New Testament portrayal is obviously an illustrative parable, not a biographical sketch. It is to be understood and

treated as a parable—designed to portray and enforce a moral lesson. Its personages—the rich man and Lazarus—were not actual historical figures, but imaginary characters representing *classes of people*. And, we repeat, one cannot admit certain portions to be parabolic, and at the same time insist that other portions are literal. The narrative is a unit and stands or falls together. In a parable the various details do not have individual significance in themselves. They simply constitute an appropriate setting for the story. Consistency, reasonableness, or truthfulness are not prerequisite. But it is vastly different with *historical* narratives. Conflict with fact is fatal there.

The fundamental principle illustrated in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is unquestionably that *eternal destiny is decided in this present life; and that there is no second probation*. It clearly declares that there can be no alteration or improvement of the condition of those who die outside the provisions of salvation. Moreover, if this story were historical, it would have to be in harmony with the general teaching or tenor of Scripture. But, as we have observed, the idea that good and bad alike enter upon their reward at death is not in harmony with the general tenor of Scripture. These parabolic details and divergences have nothing to do with any basic doctrinal teaching on the intermediate state; nor do they bear on the character and duration of the future punishment of the wicked. Such do not come within its scope. These principles are determinative.

We should also recognize that a parable may illustrate some fundamental aspect of truth based upon current customs or contemporary sayings, however erroneous such may be in themselves. And such parables must always be understood in the light of the truth they are designed to teach. In reality this parable has no reference to future punishment or to the condition of man between death and the resurrection. And not a word is said as to the duration of the flame in Hades, in which the scene is placed. Yet *Eternal Torment* is the main point of the contender for the immortality of the soul.



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Christ's Parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son Form the Setting for His Further Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

IV. Christ's Great Parable of the Lost Opportunity

The story of Dives and Lazarus was the last in a series of moving stories, addressed primarily to the Pharisees, as recorded by Luke. The fact that Jesus talked with outcasts and sinners drew sharp censure from the Pharisees, who murmured, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2). These narratives were the stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, then of the unjust steward, and finally that of the *lost opportunity*.

1. REJOICING IN HEAVEN; RESENTMENT BY PHARISEES.—The same underlying lesson runs through them all—"more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (v. 7, R.S.V.). There is obvious satire in Christ's reference to the "righteous" persons. As with the lost coin and the lost son, there is heavenly

rejoicing over the recovery of the lost—but resentment by the Pharisees. More than a hundred times the expression “kingdom of God,” or “kingdom of heaven,” appears in the Gospels, often stressing joy and rejoicing over the reclaiming of the sinner. But the Pharisees, with their stultifying rules and repressive regulations and traditions and smug racial arrogance, found no place for rejoicing over the recovery of the lost.

In the parable of the unjust steward Christ emphasized the necessity of building friendships for the future, drawing a lesson even from this man’s questionable shrewdness concerning his *earthly* future. How much more important to prepare for the *life to come*. But these important lessons were all spurned by the Pharisees, and they “derided” Christ (Luke 16:14). Their perverse attitude and actions drew a stern rebuke. They were seeking to “justify” themselves before men, but their attitudes were an “abomination in the sight of God” (v. 15).

Thus it was that “the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (v. 16). Outcasts, without a knowledge of the law and the prophets, were pressing into the kingdom of God, while those who exulted in having the Sacred Oracles committed into their hands concealed cancerous sin in their hearts. Meticulous over professed piety, they were exceedingly lax as to morals, such as with divorce (vs. 17, 18).

2. LOGICAL CLIMAX OF “LOST OPPORTUNITY” PARABLE.—The timing of these parables is also significant. They were spoken near the close of Christ’s public ministry. He was making His last appeals, based on the shepherd’s love, the woman’s diligent search, the wonderful love of the father over his wayward son, then preparation for the life to come. And now the Master brings forward His last parable in the series—the *necessity of being ready for the day of death and the futility of counting on a second probation*. Its burden was *the tragedy of the lost opportunity and the eternal fixity of man’s destiny when life ends*.

It was likewise to show that riches, instead of assuredly leading into the “everlasting habitations” of the saved (Luke

16:9), might prove a fatal barrier against salvation. So the story of the rich man and Lazarus logically belongs where it is—at the end of this series.

V. Salient Points and Perplexing Problems Outlined

1. TERSE OUTLINE OF THE PARABLE.—Let us first get the story before us in a few broad strokes. Two scenes are portrayed: (1) life in the present world, and (2) eternal destiny in the nether world. First, there was a “certain rich man” who “fared sumptuously” on earth (Luke 16:19). Then there was Lazarus, a poverty-stricken beggar, in hunger and misery, and covered with sores (vs. 20, 21). Death came to both, Lazarus being “carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom” (v. 22). The rich man was “buried,” but finding himself in torment, lifted up his *eyes* and saw Abraham in the distance, with Lazarus “*in his bosom*” (v. 23).

Addressing “Father Abraham” rather than God—thus relying on his relationship to Abraham—Dives pleaded for mercy, asking that Lazarus “dip the tip of his *finger* in water” to cool his *tongue*, and thus relieve his suffering, for he was “tormented in this flame” (v. 24). But Abraham refused, reminding Dives that in his earthly lifetime he had the “good things,” while Lazarus suffered “evil things.” But now this is reversed, Lazarus being “comforted” while Dives is “tormented” (v. 25). And Abraham further reminded Dives of the “great gulf fixed” between them, which made any passage or relief impossible (v. 26).

The appeal for himself failing, Dives next asked that Lazarus be sent to his five brethren still on earth, to warn them “lest they also come into this place of torment” (vs. 27, 28). But Abraham’s significant reply was, “They have Moses and the prophets [*the OT Scriptures*]; let them hear them” (v. 29). Then Dives protested that if only “one went unto them from the dead, they will repent” (v. 30). But Abraham reiterated his position: “*If they hear not Moses and the*

prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (v. 31).

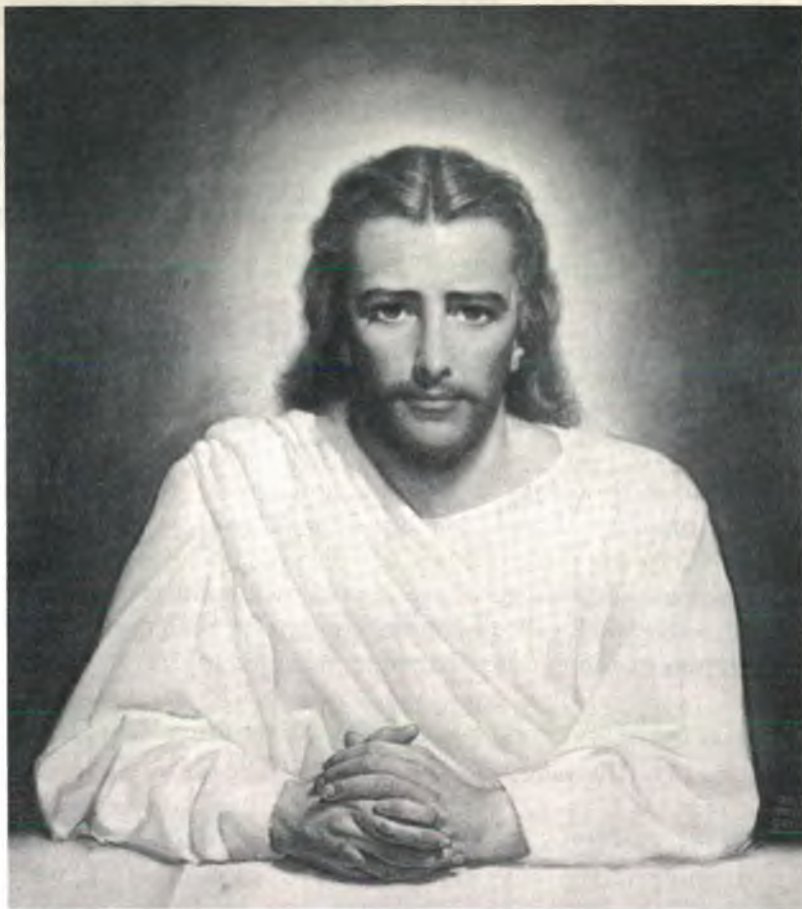
Dives's very request was, of course, a reflection upon God—"If Thou hadst more adequately warned me, I would not now be here." Anyway, that was the tale. And the Pharisees had many such folklore stories of imaginary conversations.

2. KEY TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS EXAMINED.—Now let us examine the key expressions in this parabolic fable. The narrative takes in earth, Hades, and Paradise—a large coverage. The rich man was the Pharisees' ideal. He fared sumptuously—lived in abundance. The translation of *plousios* ("rich") by *dives* in the Latin Vulgate, gave rise to the notion that his actual name was Dives, as he is frequently dubbed—and which we here use for brevity.

There was nothing flagrantly blameworthy in the rich man's outward life. He was not voluptuous or debauched. He was philanthropic in his way, and permitted Lazarus to beg at the gate of his beautiful mansion. In the concept of the Pharisees, Dives's place in the hereafter, with Abraham and the other worthies, was assured. But when his account was closed an impassable gulf separated him from Abraham. His whole life had been lived in false security. Now he was outside the kingdom of God forever.

The "*beggar*" was named Lazarus. The Pharisees held the beggar in disdain, and gloried in the success of the rich Dives. While both died, the record does not say the beggar was buried. At that time, unknown and unclaimed beggars who were overtaken by death along the roadside were carried to Tophet, outside of Jerusalem, and flung into the perpetual fires, kept burning there to destroy the offal, and corpses and carcasses such as this. Although nothing is said about an intangible immortal soul having left the body at death, these two characters are, by proponents of Innate Immortality, commonly regarded as *disembodied spirits*.⁴

⁴ Thus Van Osterzee, and various other commentators, maintain that the story teaches the uninterrupted continuance of the soul separate from the body, in eternal blessedness or woe.



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Those Searching Eyes Are Ever Seeking for Responsive Hearts That Will Accept His Offer of Character Restoration and Life Eternal.

As to the “angels,” the Pharisees taught that there were sets of angels—one for the wicked, the other for the good.⁵ And “Abraham’s bosom” was, of course, not literal, but a figure of speech—a Jewish idiom meaning Paradise, with Abraham welcoming the newcomers at their death, just as many modern Christians conceive of Saint Peter as welcoming the righteous at the gate of Heaven. The reference to the “bosom” can perhaps be understood in the light of Christ’s statement that He dwelt “in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18).

⁵ Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, vol. 12, pp. 159-163.

Curiously enough, the Pharisees also taught that in life two men may be "coupled together," so that one sees the other after death, and they converse together.* In fact, the Pharisees had numerous legends and tales of similar imaginary situations, according to Bishop Lightfoot.

3. SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE; UNWILLINGNESS TO BELIEVE.

—Then Dives lifts up his eyes and strangely sees Abraham afar off. But consistency is not called for in a parable. The narrative here puts Heaven and Hell within seeing and speaking distance—but with a yawning, impassable gulf between. It is a curious situation. Mark it: This "gulf" was too wide and too deep to cross over, but narrow enough to see and converse across. (It was such a concept, incidentally, that gave rise to Jonathan Edward's strange contention that the sight of the agonies of the damned enhances the bliss of the redeemed. Think, however, of a godly mother eternally witnessing the excruciating agonies and pleadings of a lost son or daughter!)

"Father Abraham" is addressed as if he were God, with Lazarus at his beck and call. The question inevitably arises for Christians, Can those who die in Christ, forever converse across the dividing chasm with those who have died out of Christ? But, for our consolation, Christ was not teaching the geography of the underworld. The question of the future world was not under discussion. It was not a theological but an *ethical* problem—the right use of *opportunity* and of *wealth* (for the chapter opens with the parable of the unjust steward). The introductory principle was, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (see Luke 16:11-13). And the climax of the parable is, What saith the *Scripture*?

Rather, the parable represents the irrevocable separation, fixed by death, between the good and the evil at the close of their earthly probation. Each must remain in the class in which death finds him, until the great assize. And no one is assigned to the last fearful *second* death prior to the judg-

* *Ibid.*

ment. Today, in life, one may pass from condemnation to pardon (John 3:18). But when death comes it is forever too late. The gulf is "fixed." The obvious purpose of the parable was to influence the living, and was adapted to the misconceptions of the Jews at the time. It was actually an *argumentum ad hominem* ("to the man")—an argument directed at, and appealing to, their prejudices rather than to their intellect.

Dives demanded additional evidence—*extra-Biblical* evidence—for his brothers. But Abraham's firm answer was, "*They have Moses and the prophets* [common designation for the Old Testament Scriptures]; *let them hear them*" (Luke 16:29). That is the source of ample information. The Scriptures are declared to be a true and sufficient guide to salvation. They are the authoritative source of information, available in this life, here and now, concerning human destiny and the future life. That is where we too must go, not to human tradition.

Gravity of Ascribing False Teachings to Christ

I. Josephus Illuminates Dives-Lazarus Story

Most fortunately for our investigation, Josephus left on record a "Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades,"¹ which illuminates Jesus' Dives and Lazarus story. Not only does it parallel Christ's narration, showing that it was based on a current Jewish belief, but it amplifies and explains the contemporary concepts and expressions of the Jews, frankly drawn from Platonism.

But it does more. It reveals at the same time how Christian advocates of Immortal-Soulism and Eternal Torment have, in their ardor, gone beyond the specifications of the parable, and read into it *present* eternal suffering for the wicked in the unquenchable fires of Gehenna, and this *prior* to the judgment—neither of which is justified by the original record. An epitome of Josephus' "Discourse on Hades," as currently held in the first century A.D., is here given rather fully because of its importance to our analysis. But first let us note the pertinency, relevancy, and admissibility of Josephus' testimony.

I. REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER OF JOSEPHUS' DEPICTION.
—Flavius Josephus (d. c. A.D. 100), celebrated Jewish priest

¹ An extract out of Josephus' "Discourse of the Greeks Concerning Hades," in *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (Whiston tr.).



HARRY ANDERSON, ARTIST
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Sin and Sacrilege in Antediluvian Days Multiplied Until God Had to Destroy a Polluted Race and Start Man Afresh With a New Opportunity. That Is the Grace of God.



HARRY ANDERSON, ARTIST
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God's Covenant Was Given That the Earth Would Never Be Destroyed Again—Until the Final Deluge of Fire for the Destruction of All Obdurate Sinners.

and historian, was a Pharisee.² He was not only highly trained in Jewish law but recorded the contemporary Jewish teachings, sayings, and traditions of the times. In fact, his writings constitute the most comprehensive Jewish history of the century. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Rome and its institutions, and basked in the sunshine of the favor of the emperors Vespasian and Titus, becoming adviser to Vespasian and serving as interpreter to Titus during the siege of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70—which act aroused the antipathy of the Jews. But this did not alter his competence as a witness.

² Josephus' autobiography appears at the outset of his *Works*. Of priestly descent, he came from the "first of the twenty-four courses." He first studied the teachings of all three major sects—Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes—and finally identified himself with the Pharisees.

Josephus received Roman citizenship, together with a pension, and adopted the name Flavius, after that of the imperial family. Thenceforth he devoted himself solely to writing. His works were highly esteemed by the Church Fathers, especially Jerome. And he was ever loyal to the Jewish customs and religion, as then held—particularly that of the Pharisees, in whom we are most interested. His works are still the most comprehensive source of information on the times and the beliefs and teachings of the Jews in the period of Christ and the apostles. Such is his competence and credibility as a firsthand witness.

2. MULTIPLE FEATURES OF HADES DESCRIBED.—Josephus explains that Hades is considered to be a “*subterraneous region*,” where the “souls of righteous and unrighteous” are alike “detained,” and wherein there is “*perpetual darkness*.” It is a “place” for the “custody of souls,” where “angel” guardians distribute “*temporary punishment*.” In an adjacent but separate section is a “*lake of unquenchable fire*”—but into which, Josephus explicitly adds, “we suppose no one hath hitherto been cast.” That is significant, and should be remembered.

It is prepared for a “day afore-determined by God,” “in which one righteous sentence shall deservedly be passed upon all men.” The “unjust” and “disobedient” will *then*, and only then, be assigned to “*everlasting punishment*,” while the “just” will obtain an “*incorruptible and never-fading kingdom*.” Both groups are “confined in Hades, but not in the same place.”

3. “JUST” GUIDED BY “ANGELS” TO “BOSOM OF ABRAHAM.”—There is but “one descent into this” subterraneous region, “at whose gate . . . stands an archangel with an host” of angels. All who pass that way are “conducted down by the angels appointed over souls.” “The just are guided to the *right hand*,” which is a “region of *light*,” with a “prospect of good things” to come. There is for them no toil, heat, or cold.

They ever look upon the "countenance of the *fathers* and of the *just*." Here they wait for "*eternal new life in heaven*." And now comes the climactic sentence—"This place we call *The bosom of Abraham*." That is unmistakable identification, and must be remembered.

4. "UNJUST" DRAGGED TO "NEIGHBORHOOD" OF HELL.—Turning next to the "unjust," Josephus says that they are "dragged by force to the *left hand* by the angels allotted for punishment." He refers to such souls as "prisoners driven by violence." The angels "reproach" them, "threaten" them, and "thrust them still downward." In fact, they are dragged "into the neighborhood of hell itself [Gehenna]," "hard by it," where they "continually hear the noise of it," and where they are near "the hot vapour itself." They have a "near view of this spectacle, as of a terrible and exceeding great prospect of fire," and are in "fearful expectation of a future judgment," and are "in effect punished thereby," in a preliminary way.

5. IMPASSABLE GULF SEPARATES THE TWO GROUPS.—But that is not all. They "*see* the place of the *fathers* and the *just*," which sight in itself is a punishment. And here is the second telltale parallel—"a chaos deep and large is fixed" between the two groups, so that neither can "pass over" to the other side. That is the next major point to be remembered. And this, Josephus declares, is Hades, wherein the souls of all men are confined until a proper season, which God hath determined. Then He will "make a resurrection of all men from the dead," "raising again those very bodies," which the Greeks erroneously think are "dissolved" forever, and will not be resurrected.

Then, declaring that "according to the doctrine of Plato" (who is thus frankly named), the Greeks believe that the "soul is created" and "made immortal by God," Josephus asserts that God is also able to make "immortal" the "body" He has "raised" to life. So, he continues, the Jews believe that the "body will be raised again," and although it is "dissolved, it



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The Terror of the Wicked Will Parallel the Joy of the Redeemed as Our Lord Appears in the Clouds of Heaven at His Second Advent.

is not perished." Again, "to every body shall be its own soul restored."

6. ETERNAL TORMENT FOR WICKED AFTER JUDGMENT.—So, Josephus concludes, after just "judgment" at the "judgment-seat," the righteous will have an "everlasting fruition." But the wicked will then be allotted to "eternal punishment"—"unquenchable fire, and that without end, and a certain fiery worm, never dying." But that, according to Josephus, is still *future*, not present. The fire and the worm will *not* destroy the body, and the worm will continue its erosion with "never-ceasing grief." "Sleep" will not afford relief. And "death will not free them from their punishment"—which ideas again bear the earmark of Platonism. "Nor will the interceding prayers of their kindred profit them."

That, in careful epitome, is the portrayal of Hades, by Josephus. The startling similarity to circumstances in the parable of Dives and Lazarus is inescapable. Missing details are here supplied. Hazy points are here clarified. Jesus was clearly using a then-common tradition of the Jews to press home a

moral lesson in a related field. And this Jewish concept of Hades was frankly derived from Platonism, through Apocryphal writers, but climaxing with Philo.

7. DEFLECTING INROADS IN INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD.—Several pertinent points should here be noted. This period was critical. It was the Jewish transition hour. PHILO JUDAEUS (d. c. A.D. 47), of Alexandria, had lived in the generation just prior to Josephus. Under Philo the inroads of Greek Platonism reached their peak in deflecting the faith of a large segment of the Jews from the primal Mosaic teachings on Conditional Immortality and its inseparable corollary, the ultimate destruction of the wicked.

Over a period of some two hundred years prior to Christ, tangent positions had been developing under the impact of Platonic philosophy. Thus the concept that Hades contained *two* chambers appeared in 4 *Ezra* 4:41, along with the idea that the righteous inhabit one chamber (*Wisdom of Solomon* 3:1), while the wicked are accursed, scourged, and tormented in the other (1 *Enoch* 22:9-13). The Midrash (on *Ruth* 1:1, Proem) likewise assigns one chamber to the righteous, with the other to the wicked. The Talmud (*Erubin* 19*) also tells of the torment of the wicked.

The visibility of one company to the other, in the respective chambers, is similarly in the Midrash (on *Eccl.* 7:14). And the wicked see the angels guard the righteous (4 *Ezra* 7:86). Both the Talmud (*Kethuboth* 104*) and 4 *Ezra* 7:85-87, 91-95, tell of the welcoming of the righteous by companies of ministering angels. And 4 *Maccabees* 13:17 mentions the righteous as welcomed in Hades by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And finally, the righteous, as part of their reward, are privileged to sit "in Abraham's lap" (Talmud *Kiddushin* 72^b). That is the third major point that should be borne in mind.

In his *Antiquities*, Josephus also gives this terse added testimony:

"They [the Pharisees] also believe that souls have an immortal

vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again.”³

It is therefore obvious that the principal points in the parable of Dives and Lazarus were based upon current Jewish folklore, which had infiltrated from Platonic philosophy. Christ met them on their own familiar ground and drew a fundamental moral lesson therefrom, capitalizing upon their preconceived opinions.

8. ADVOCATES INJECT UNWARRANTED ADDITIONS.—But the construction placed upon the parable of Dives and Lazarus by many modern proponents of Immortal-Soulism, who invoke the sanction of this parable by reading into it what is neither there in the original narrative in Luke nor sanctioned by Josephus’ definitive elucidations, is both regrettable and unethical.

Please note the following in Josephus’ discourse: First of all, Hades, in the section for wicked souls, here under discussion, is *not* Gehenna (which is defined as the “lake of fire”), but is only *near* Gehenna, or in the “neighborhood of hell.” Second, according to Josephus, *no one had yet been cast into the lake of fire*. That is important and decisive. Third, any contemporary “punishment” is but “temporary,” as the wicked may feel the breath of the “hot vapour.” It is *not* eternal envelopment in the fires of Hell, as often pictured. Fourth, at the appointed time there will be a resurrection of the body, *which will then be made immortal*.

In that feature the Jews differed from the Greek Platonists, as well as on the concept of transmigration. And fifth, according to Josephus’ elucidation, the eternal punishing and the visitation of unquenchable fire will come only *after* the future judgment and its just sentences—which he declares had *not yet taken place*.

That is a vastly different picture from the eisegetical

³ *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 18, chap. I, sec. 3.

portrayal of those who build *present* Eternal Torment for the immortally damned on this passage. Such are the regrettable lengths resorted to in an attempt to find Biblical support for an alien, pagan philosophy.

II. Literalism Violates Consistency, Vitiates Christ's Witness, Overturns Scripture Testimony

1. SCOFIELD MAKES PASSAGE WHOLLY LITERAL.—Before we survey critically the inconsistencies of a literal interpretation, let us note one representative example of championship of the literalistic exposition, and its involvements. Dr. C. I. Scofield, in his well-known Scofield Reference Bible, in his note on Luke 16:23, says that the "hell" of this text—the Greek *hadēs*, and its Hebrew equivalent *she'ōl*—is the "unseen world," "the place of departed human spirits between death and the resurrection." He then sharply distinguishes between *hadēs* (1) "*before* the ascension of Christ," and (2) *hadēs* "*since* the ascension of Christ." Advocating the literalistic interpretation, Scofield states that these passages "make it clear" that "hades was formerly in two divisions, the abodes respectively of the saved and the lost."

The "former" (the "abode of the saved") was then "called 'paradise,' and 'Abraham's bosom.'" Scofield then states that "both designations were Talmudic, but *adopted by Christ* in Luke 16:22; 23:43." And he declares, "the blessed dead were with Abraham, they were *conscious* and were '*comforted*.'" Then he adds:

"The lost were separated from the saved by a 'great gulf fixed' (Luke 16:26). The representative man of the *lost* who are now in hades is the rich man of Lk. 16:19-31. He was *alive, conscious, in full exercise of his faculties, memory, etc., and in torment.*"⁴ (Italics supplied.)

⁴ In his "*Hades since the ascension of Christ*" section, Scofield says: "So far as the *unsaved* dead are concerned, no change of their place or condition is revealed in Scripture. At the judgment of the great white throne, hades will give them up, they will be judged, and will pass into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:13, 14)." But henceforth (since the ascension of Christ) Paradise *has been changed* to the "third heaven" (citing 2 Cor. 12:1-4). Now, "during the present church-age," the *saved* who have died are "absent from the body, at home with the Lord" (citing Eph. 4:8-10). And he concludes: "The wicked dead in hades, and the righteous dead 'at home with the Lord,' alike await the resurrection."

2. INCONSISTENCIES INVOLVED IN LITERAL INTERPRETATION.—This story of Dives and Lazarus is either the narrative of a literal, historical episode or it is merely a fictional parable. It cannot be both, or half and half, as some seek to make it. If literal, it must be true to fact and consistent in detail. If it be a parable, then only the primary moral truth to be conveyed need concern us, with the narrative subject to the recognized licenses and limitations of an imaginary illustration.

However, many insist on its literality. But a literal application breaks down under the weight of its own absurdities and contradictions, as will become apparent under scrutiny, and when cited to support the popular concept of the Innate Immortality of the soul. For example, contenders for literalism hold Dives and Lazarus to be disembodied spirits; that is, destitute of bodies. Here, then, we have two ghosts, or shades, devoid of bodies and bodily organs—though there is not the remotest reference to the soul or spirit of man. Yet Dives is here represented as having “eyes” that see, a “tongue” that speaks, and as seeking relief from cooling water by means of the “finger” of Lazarus—real bodily parts. That surely must be an embarrassing inconsistency to the literalist who treats them as historical and literal. But that was all part of the Jewish tale.

Further, an unbridgeable, material gulf is incomprehensible on the hypothesis of immaterial spirit beings in the nether regions. Disembodied “souls,” or “spirits,” are supposed to penetrate or pass everywhere.

Again, if “*Abraham's bosom*” is figurative, then “*Abraham*” cannot logically be literal. It would surely be the height of incongruity to have Abraham literal but his bosom figurative! As to Abraham, in Scripture record he died and his sons buried him (Gen. 25:8, 9), and there is no account of his resurrection, as was the case with Moses (Deut. 34:5; Jude 9; Matt. 17:3). According to Hebrews 11:8-19, like all the patriarchs, Abraham has not yet received the promise, but is await-

ing that "better resurrection" at the second coming of Christ (vs. 35, 39, 40).

Among other incongruities, literalism places Heaven and Hell within geographical speaking and seeing distance of each other—with saints and sinners eternally holding futile converse. (Ponder once more the case of a husband and wife so situated, or a parent and child.) Again, Dives lifted up "his eyes, being in torments," and said, ". . . I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:23, 24), but nothing is said in the parable as to the duration of his torment. But according to clear statements of Scripture, any such torment occurs only in connection with the *second* death, and follows, but never precedes, the Second Advent (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

Such a conflicting literalistic contention clearly goes too far. The fires of Gehenna do not precede the Second Advent. And in this parable, Dives is in Hades, not in Gehenna. But when the figurative and fictional character of the parable of Dives and Lazarus is recognized, then the plaguing incongruities as to time, place, space, distance, et cetera, all vanish. The story, with all its inconsistencies, is simply told to convey an important moral or spiritual truth.

3. LITERALISM CONTRADICTS CHRIST'S EXPLICIT DECLARATIONS.—But that is not all. To use this parable as proof that men receive their rewards at death is squarely to contradict Christ Himself, who explicitly states that the righteous and the wicked receive their reward "*when the Son of man shall come in his glory*" (Matt. 25:31-44). He definitely placed the *recompense* at the resurrection, the time of harvest, and end of the world—when the "wheat" of God's people are gathered unto His garner, and the wicked, like "tares," are bundled for burning (Matt. 13:30, 49; Luke 14:14).

As elsewhere seen, Jesus referred to "hell" (Matt. 10:28), "hell fire" (Matt. 5:22), the "resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29), the "damnation of hell" (Matt. 23:33), and "eternal damnation" (Mark 3:29). But He always put them as future, not present, and as *following*, not preceding, His sec-

ond coming (Matt. 25:32, 33, 46). And Jesus declared that He was going to prepare a place for us in the "many mansions" of His "Father's house" (John 14:2). But He states that He will not "come again" to "receive" us until His second advent (v. 3).

4. LITERALISM CONTRADICTS INSPIRED REVELATION'S DICTUMS.—Furthermore, if the narrative is literal, then the beggar received his reward and the rich man his punishment immediately upon death, in the interim *before* the judgment day and the consequent separation of the good and evil. But such a procedure is repugnant to all justice. Paul said that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). That was still future in apostolic times. And the day of separation will not come until "the Son of man shall come in his glory . . . : and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall *separate them one from another*" (Matt. 25:31, 32).

Christ's own promise is, "Behold, I come quickly; and my *reward* is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). That tallies with His promise, "Thou shalt be *recompensed at the resurrection of the just*" (Luke 14:14). That also was Paul's personal expectation: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, *shall give me at that day*" (2 Tim. 4:8).

And, as seen again and again, literalism squarely contradicts the uniform testimony of the Old Testament—that the dead, both righteous and wicked, without reference to character, lie silent and unconscious in the sleep of the first death until the resurrection day. In the Biblical Hades there is no speech, sight, or pain. It is not a place of torture. But the Pharisees had made God's Word void, as concerns the condition of the dead,⁵ by their "traditions" derived from pagan Platonic philosophy, which in turn had been borrowed from Egypt, Babylon, and Persia. So it was that Dives is here pic-

⁵ See Ps. 6:5; 31:17; 88:11; 115:17; 146:4; Eccl. 9:6, 10; 12:7; Isa. 38:17-19, et cetera.

tured as in a place of torment, living in insufferable flames. It was simply Hebraized Platonism, and was in no way condoned or endorsed by Christ.

III. Gravity of Ascribing False Teaching to Christ, Embodiment of Truth

1. USE OF PARABLE NOT ENDORSEMENT OF ITS THEOLOGY.—The question arises, Did not Jesus' use of this Jewish belief make Him endorse the fictitious plot of the parable? Rather, is it not like the Christian story of the man who dreamed that he died and went to the gates of Heaven? Saint Peter supposedly met him there, and gave him a long piece of chalk. He told him to climb to the top of some marble stairs, and there he would find a blackboard on which he was to write down all his sins. Making his way slowly up the stairs, he met a friend hastening down. In his surprise he asked his friend where he was going, and the friend replied, "I'm going down for more chalk." Now, we ask in all seriousness, would the telling of that story commit one to believing the literality of the theology of the illustration, or rather the point it was designed to convey?

2. GRAVITY OF IMPLIED CHARGES AGAINST CHRIST.—The seriousness of charging that Christ personally believed, publicly sanctioned, and actually set forth as truth this Greco-Jewish parable involving Immortal-Soulism, is to charge Him with gross inconsistency, neutralizing His own testimony, playing false to truth, and contradicting His own eighteen illustrations, from animate and inanimate life, concerning the doom of the wicked. Without exception, He taught the utter, ultimate destruction of the wicked. It is likewise to put Christ in total conflict with His own seven references to the complete destruction and disappearance of being, for the wicked, in His definitive descriptions of the relentless fires of Gehenna.

More than that, to attribute belief and endorsement of this fable of Dives and Lazarus to Christ is to make Him deny

His own uniformly consistent and multiple teachings on Hades—the term actually used for “hell” in this parable—as a state of unconscious sleep for all men, good and bad, between death and the resurrection (as in John 11:11, 14), from which *there must be an awakening before there is any return of consciousness, thought, or activity*, and where none of the wicked are at present undergoing torment.

It likewise puts Christ in the position of endorsing the contention that Hades is eternal, whereas according to the Apocalypse, it is at last to be destroyed (Rev. 20:14). And even the fires of Gehenna are ultimately to burn out and disappear when they have done their appointed work, and the wicked are no more, and all pain and death and torment end forever, as the new heavens and new earth supersede the present world that is to be destroyed in the coming lake of fire (Revelation 21 and 22; 2 Peter 3:10-13).

3. MAKES CHRIST GUILTY OF PURVEYING ERROR AND PERVERSION.—Such a charge makes Christ guilty of endorsing all the multiple inconsistencies of a literalistic interpretation of a then-current Jewish fable in which the fictional figures comport with notions of retribution during the period of “death” clearly adopted from Platonism, which makes death but a continuation of life in the afterworld. It would thus charge Christ with guilt in the purveyance of error and perversion. It would put Him into direct conflict with the all-sufficiency of Scripture, and of His own timeless admonition: “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31).

4. DEMANDS OF RESURRECTION BROUGHT ON CRISIS.—To accept the Platonic dogma of Immortal-Soulism is to cast overboard all that Moses and the prophets have written—God’s appointed witness, as well as all that Christ taught. Moreover, one did actually rise from the dead a short time later and bore his testimony (Lazarus, in John 11). Christ’s carping critics there proved the futility of such an appearance. In fact, it was

this very episode—Christ's last and crowning miracle—that brought on the crisis in the rejection of Jesus as the life-giving Messiah.

It was this very miracle, demanded by Dives, that spurred the priests on to plot and accomplish Christ's death (John 11: 47-54). Christ's words were eternally true—they were neither persuaded by Lazarus' resurrection (John 11) nor by His own, which climaxed it all (Matt. 28:1-6). They were not at all persuaded (Luke 16:31), much less did they repent (v. 30).

IV. Major Area of Disagreement Between Christ and Pharisees

We must not conclude this survey without stressing the fact that the nature and destiny of man was a major area of disagreement between Christ and the Pharisees. He was a Scripturalist, sustaining the unvarying teaching of Moses and the prophets on the nature and destiny of man. They were Platonists, having left the scriptural platform and espoused the Innate-Immortality postulate of Platonic deduction and philosophy. Christ was a Conditionalist, proclaiming eternal life and immortality as a gift, restricted to those only who should believe and receive Him as the Life and the Resurrection. They were Immortal-Soulists, holding to the natural, inherent, constitutional immortality of the human soul. To that position they were now irrevocably committed.

1. DIFFERENCES AS OPPOSITE AS LIGHT AND DARKNESS.—As to the destiny of man, Christ taught the ultimate and utter destruction of the willful sinner. Man, as a rejector of life, truth, and light, is mortal, and hence susceptible to death and destruction. But the Pharisees taught that the soul of man is innately and indefeasibly immortal and indestructible, and that therefore the damned will live on forever in excruciating torment. The difference was sharply drawn and mutually exclusive. The contrast was as fundamental as the difference between light and darkness.

This matter of the soul and its destiny was an area of fundamental disagreement between Christ and the Pharisees. On this issue their positions were diametrically opposed and irreconcilable. But they were not only totally opposite, they were mutually destructive. If Christ was right, they were wrong. If Christ's teachings were true, theirs were erroneous—and vice versa. Obviously, if Christ was victorious, they were defeated. There was no escape from such a conclusion.

It was over this basic issue that the culminating crisis came in their relationships, as they rejected His truth and chose to cling to their own error. It was the irreconcilability of the two positions, among other things, that finally led them completely to reject Christ and His distasteful teachings on the life, death, and destiny of man. They would have none of His *life* program.

On this there could be no compromise, no capitulation. That meant that He must be silenced, put out of the way. His witness must be crushed—otherwise their own position was doomed. It was a question of stark survival, for they saw the outcome with crystal clearness. He must go.

2. CHRIST MUST NOT BE ARRAYED AGAINST CHRIST.—That is why it is inconceivable that Christ, in this controverted parable based on the fictitious but representative characters of Dives and Lazarus, in their fabled converse, cannot logically, scripturally, or ethically be made to support the Pharisaic position on an error that Christ came to counteract and overthrow. To do so is to array Christ against Himself (Matt. 12:25; Mark 3:24, 25; Luke 14:17, 18), and in this instance the Dives-Lazarus narrative against the total emphasis and weight of His whole message and mission.

It is to take the unthinkable position of siding with the Pharisees against Christ. And it is to place Christ in the inconceivable position of adopting the false reasoning of Platonic pagan philosophy as against the inspired revelation of the Scriptures of truth. It is unquestionably to take the path of deviation from the straight and narrow way of truth and life.



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The Cross Provides the Only Exit to Salvation and Life From Earth's Dark Cavern of Sin, Suffering, and Death. It Is God's Provision and Humanity's Only Hope.

And it involves charging Christ with supporting the gross absurdities inherent in a literalistic, Immortal-Soulist interpretation of the story of Dives and Lazarus. It is virtually to undo His entire life's testimony in a sellout to the Pharisees. That cannot be!

But it must here be added that this same issue persists, in varying degrees, to this day, propelled by the great medieval Latin apostasy, and perpetuated in many Protestant circles. Hence the confusion and conflict over this question in these modern times.

In the light of these sobering facts and fundamental principles, and in the light of Christ's impeccable truthfulness and His own personification and embodiment of truth, we must therefore deny and reject the validity of the literalist interpretation of this parable-fable as supporting the Innate Immortality of the soul and the Eternal Torment of the damned. Christ, we maintain, was consistent and truthful, and unwavering to the end in His adherence to, and enunciation of, the truth as to man and his destiny.

We must not place Christ in the unthinkable position of endorsing the Platonic error that was so repugnant to His very nature as the Fountainhead of life and truth. He must not be betrayed in the house of His Christian friends. He must not be crucified upon a cross of Innate-Immortality error.

V. Conclusion: Immortal Soulism Collapses Under Scrutiny

1. FOURFOLD CASE AGAINST POPULAR CONTENTION.—In the light of the full-rounded evidence here surveyed, we reject the story of Dives and Lazarus as in any way proving the continuing consciousness of the dead or as establishing the postulate of the Eternal Torment of the wicked. Such a dual contention is wholly without logical justification, and, as seen, flatly contravenes both the testimony of Christ and the consistent witness of Scripture. Death is consistently set forth throughout the Old Testament as a condition of silence, darkness, and unconsciousness, not of life and activity, and joy or agony.

In the light of all the facts and factors, we must consequently conclude:

(1) That the *characters* in this dialogue, with its parabolic personifications, were wholly imaginary. The legendary episode did not happen literally, and could not happen;

(2) That the *timing* was likewise fictitious, for it clearly antedated the Biblical sequence, and is consequently in conflict with Bible truth in this area; and

(3) That, as this is the only place in the New Testament

where Hades is portrayed as a place of torment, in this fable form—just as in the Old Testament Isaiah raises dead kings in *she'ól* to utter a taunt upon Babylon (Isa. 14:4-11)—it cannot and does not nullify the whole galaxy of positive, explicit, nonfigurative and inescapable Bible teaching upon which alone Christian doctrine is to be built and sustained. Pagan Platonism, polluting the Jewish faith, which Jesus cited but did not endorse in this legendary fable-parable, should never be allowed to corrupt sound Christian doctrine, which Christ came to establish and protect.

2. SPECIFIC COUNTS AGAINST ACCEPTANCE ARE DETERMINATIVE.—We should therefore reject the contention that the sleeping souls of the damned are presently alive in torment, for that implies that man's reward is received at death. But that fallacy—

(1) nullifies the judgment by *anticipating* its appointed time.

(2) completely *contradicts* the clear testimony that the dead are asleep.

(3) represents disembodied spirits as *inconsistently possessing* bodily members.

(4) puts the spirits in full view of each other forever in the future world—another example of the infiltration of Persian Dualism into Platonism, and thence into Jewish thinking.

Or, to put it in another way: (1) God's appointed time of grace for man is *before* death and the resurrection—which is the main point and purpose of the parable; (2) retribution comes only *after* the resurrection; and (3) life after death is always contingent and *consequent* upon the resurrection. These determinative principles are violated in a literal interpretation. The story of Dives and Lazarus was never designed to teach conditions on the other side of death. That is an extraneous contention that has been introduced without warrant. It is fallacious as an argument and is unworthy of the name of sound exegesis. The literalistic "problem" of the passage collapses under the weight of its own inconsistencies.

Christ's Majestic Answer to the Penitent's Plea

I. Problem Text (Luke 23:43): Penitent Thief—"Today" —and "Paradise"

We now turn to the second "problem text" in the Gospels—the solemn promise made by Christ to the penitent thief on the adjacent cross at Calvary. This passage is always brought forth by proponents of Innate Immortality as "proof positive" of the uninterrupted immortality of the soul—as demonstrating that both Christ and the repentant thief went that very day to "Paradise" (some intermediate place between the grave and the resurrection), and thus that their condition must have been one of continued consciousness and intelligent fellowship after death. However, it is not that simple or conclusive. Let us examine the evidence.

1. SETTING OF THIS AMAZING EPISODE.—The background briefly is this: Two malefactors (or "thieves," Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27) were led, along with Christ, to Calvary, and crucified with Him there, one on the right hand and the other on the left amid the taunting throng. The trilingual superscription, "This is the King of the Jews," was placed upon Christ's cross (Luke 23:38). Then one of the anguished malefactors railed on Christ, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us" (v. 39). But the other rebuked his criminal companion, saying:

"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?"



HOWARD SANDEN, ARTIST

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The Crucified Christ, the Author of Life, Had Power to Promise Eternal Life to the Penitent Thief and to Every Repentant Sinner.

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss" (vs. 40, 41).

It was at this point that he turned in agonizing contrition and reverently said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (v. 42).

Then it was that Jesus replied (as punctuated in most

English versions), "Verily I say unto thee, *To day* shalt thou be with me in paradise" (v. 43).

2. ACQUAINTED WITH CHRIST'S CLAIMS AND OFFERS.—That is the scene. The penitent thief had evidently been in the crowd that had witnessed Jesus' miracles. His words attest that he must have listened to Christ's marvelous teaching about His coming kingdom. He must have heard His gracious invitations to come unto Him and find the longed-for forgiveness and peace that he craved. Perhaps he had seen Jesus raise the dead. Possibly he had heard Jesus say that He must be crucified, but would rise again in triumph.

It is inconceivable that anyone would make such a request without such a background, for here were a dying thief and a dying Christ in paralleling positions on adjoining crosses. He might even have been a follower for a time, before he had turned under pressure of evil companions to the crimes for which he was now paying the bitter penalty. In any event, he knew Christ's claims and offers. And in his eleventh-hour extremity he turned in contrition to Christ, recognizing His sinlessness and believing in His claims.

But let us probe into the intent of the penitent's request, and especially into the import of Christ's reply.

3. WHAT, WHERE, AND WHEN IS "PARADISE"?—Let us observe at the very outset that one of the chief deterrents to the popular contention is the dual fact (1) that *the thief did not die that day*, and (2) that *Christ did not go to Paradise that day*, irrespective of where it is. But this leads us directly into the what, where, and when of Paradise (*Paradeisos*). The word "paradise" occurs but three times in Scripture—twice in addition to this use in Luke 23:43. Note carefully the *first* one: Paul was caught up, *in vision*, into the "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2), which in verse 4 is expressly affirmed to be "*paradise.*" Paradise, therefore, is, first of all, clearly in the *third heaven*.

The *second* usage is in our Lord's promise in the Apocalypse, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of

life, which is in the midst of the *paradise* of God" (Rev. 2:7). This establishes the fact that Paradise is likewise where the tree of life now is. And in Revelation 21 and 22, in the description of the New Jerusalem above, we read of—

"a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it [the city], and on either side of the river [of life], was there the *tree of life*, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month" (Rev. 22:1, 2).

In the Septuagint, the "garden" of Eden is described as the "*Paradise in Eden*" (Gen. 2:8). So the tree of life grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, the Holy City, on the banks of the river of life, which proceeds from the throne of God. That was the Paradise of the Old Testament, of which the prophets of old foretold in glowing terms. That is likewise the Paradise of the New Testament—in the third heaven, where the tree of life is, and where God maintains His throne. Whoever, therefore, goes to Paradise goes into the presence of God.

Paradise is emphatically not Hades, nor any part of Hades, as some contend. So if Christ and the thief went to Paradise on the day of the crucifixion, they must have gone into the presence of God the Father. But let us go back to certain basic considerations.

II. Three "Heavens and Earths"—Past, Present, Future

To understand the problem of the thief in Paradise, it is necessary first to understand the background of the three heavens and earths. First of all, "In the beginning God created *the heaven and the earth*" (Gen. 1:1). Then Peter tells of two heavens and earths: The antediluvian heaven and earth—"The heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that *then was*, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:5, 6). These were the first. Those that followed the Flood, Peter calls "the heavens and the earth, *which are now*" (v. 7), the next matching pair.

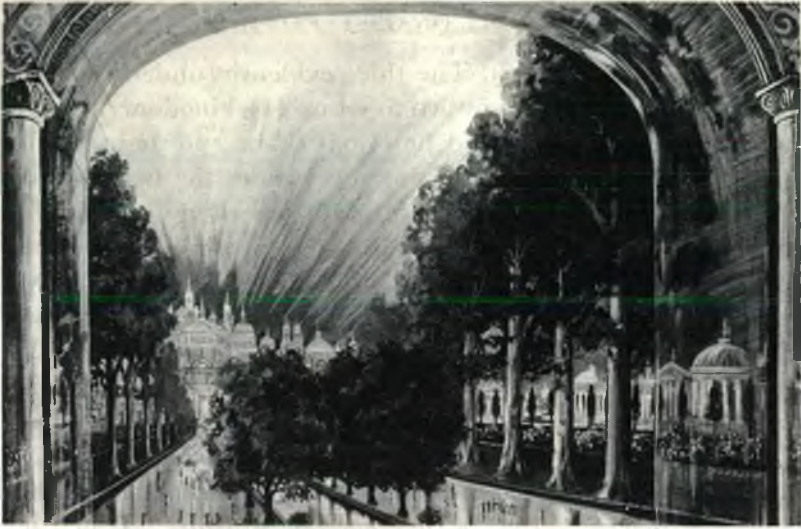
1. NO CONFLICT BETWEEN PETER'S AND JOHN'S VERSIONS.—John the revelator, however, groups these two—the antediluvian and the postdiluvian—together and simply calls them “the first heaven and the first earth” (Rev. 21:1), or the “former” heaven and earth (v. 4), in historical perspective, in contradistinction to the coming *new heaven and new earth*. The present earth, Peter tells us, is “kept in store, reserved unto fire.” Then, at the close of the *day of the Lord*, “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” (2 Peter 3:10). And “the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved” (v. 12). That will mark the passing of the *present* heaven and earth.

That which follows the present heaven and earth Peter likewise calls “*new heavens and a new earth*” (2 Peter 3:13), just as John tells of the same as “a *new heaven and a new earth*” (Rev. 21:1). So there is complete harmony between them on the new heaven and earth. Even Isaiah of old, in God’s ancient prophecy, twice declared, “Behold, I create *new heavens and a new earth*” (Isa. 65:17; cf. 66:22).

Thus we actually have three heavens and earths: (1) “The heavens [that] were of old, and the earth,” or the antediluvian “world that *then was*” (2 Peter 3:5, 6); (2) “The heavens and the earth, which *are now*” (v. 7); and finally (3) the “*new heavens and a new earth*” to come (v. 13; Rev. 21:1). Thus there is perfect harmony in the Inspired Record. And it may truly be said that the course of these three worlds constitutes the compacted history of the human race, and framework for the outworking of the plan of redemption.

2. PARADISE OF FIRST EARTH RESTORED IN THIRD EARTH.—Paradise, with its tree of life, was in the *first* heaven and earth, but disappeared by the time of the Flood. Hence it is totally absent in the second, or present, heaven and earth. But it reappears in the *third*, or new, heaven and earth, with its tree of life restored (Rev. 2:7; 22:1, 2, 14).

Paradise is Eden restored—and that is still future, when



Safe in the Eternal City of God, the Redeemed Will Eat of the Tree of Life and Drink of the Water of Life in Paradise Restored Forever.

Christ will come into His kingdom. But we repeat, *Paradise was not entered either by Christ or the thief on that crucifixion day*, as we shall see. And there is no reference to an intermediate state. Rather, Christ's promise is to what lies beyond—a joyful resurrection reunion for the penitent and his being forever with Christ in His coming kingdom.

III. Penitent Neither in Kingdom Nor in Paradise That Day

1. DID NOT DIE ON SAME DAY.—The soldiers broke the legs of the penitent thief (John 19:31-33), because he was still living as that fateful crucifixion Friday was drawing toward its close. This was so that he could not escape. But, because Jesus was already dead, His legs were not broken. So the crucifixion day ended at sunset with the thief still alive and Jesus already dead. Clearly they could not have been in Paradise *together* on that same crucifixion day.

2. "TOGETHER" THAT DAY ONLY ON ADJOINING CROSSES.—We would press the point that the penitent's request to Jesus was, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy

kingdom" (Luke 23:42). The thief evidently understood that Jesus claimed He would return to set up His kingdom. Later, at Pentecost, Peter said, "And he [God] shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive *until the times of restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20, 21). And as the Saviour has not yet returned to restore all things, the prayer of the thief has not as yet been realized.

Furthermore, Jesus could not *return* from Heaven that day, for the simple and conclusive reason that He did not *go* to Heaven that day. On the third day *after* His crucifixion, Christ said to Mary, who was about to embrace His feet in accordance with the ancient custom of deference or worship, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17) in Paradise, and that was on the third day after His crucifixion. Forty days thereafter He did ascend to God (Acts 1:3, 9), where He has remained till this present time. So, had the thief actually gone to Heaven that day (Friday)—which he did not—he would have had to wait forty-three days before Christ came to be with him.

Therefore Christ and the penitent were not together anywhere that day, except on the crosses on Golgotha.

3. JESUS WENT TO THE GRAVE, NOT TO PARADISE, THAT DAY.—Let us now note where Christ went that crucifixion day. The Scriptures expressly teach that instead of going to Paradise that crucifixion day, Christ went into the *grave—she'ól, hadēs*, gravedom. Referring to the first coming of Christ and His atoning death, the psalmist David prophesied, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell* [Heb. *she'ól*, "the grave"]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10). And Peter, at Pentecost, confirms this: "For David speaketh concerning him [Christ] . . . ; thou wilt not leave my *soul* in *hell* [Gr. *hadēs*], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One [Christ] to see corruption" (Acts 2:25-27).

The Scriptures explicitly teach that "there is no work, nor

device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the *grave* [*she'ól*], whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10). "In that very day [of death] his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4). On the contrary, the Immortal-Soulist makes *hadēs* (or OT *she'ól*) a place of life and joy; and Paradise some part of *hadēs*. But the Biblical *hadēs* could not have been the Paradise wherein the thief and his Saviour were to meet and rejoice.

As noted, the Paradise of God, with its tree of life, is clearly not in the grave, but in Heaven—to be entered by the door of the resurrection. It would be utterly unscriptural to say that Joseph's new tomb, wherein Jesus was laid, was Paradise. But when the full teaching of Scripture is adopted, this episode is in perfect harmony with the rest of the Bible on the intermediate state.

That is the beauty and majesty of truth.

4. NOT IN HEAVEN DURING "THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS."—Our Lord Himself was in the grave from the time He died and was buried in Joseph's new tomb until He rose. If anyone contends that Christ's "spirit"—which at His death He commended into His Father's hands (Luke 23:46)—was the actual, the real Christ, that notion is precluded by Christ Himself, when He said that just as surely as the prophet Jonah was "three days and three nights in the whale's belly" (Matt. 12:40), so was the *Son of man* to be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"—Hebraism for the earth, the sepulcher, or tomb (Matt. 27:60; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53; John 19:40-42).

To those who came to the sepulcher on the resurrection morn the angel said, "I know that ye seek *Jesus*, which was crucified. *He* is not here: for *he* is risen" (Matt. 28:5, 6). He was not in the tomb *because* He had risen. That is clear. But He *was* in the tomb until He left it by rising from the tomb, and thus leaving its precincts. And even after His resurrection, and before His ascension, it will be recalled, He declared that He had not yet ascended to His Father (John 20:17). *Jesus was not in Heaven during those three days.*

IV. Meaning Completely Altered by Position of Comma

1. PUNCTUATION CONSTITUTES EXEGESIS — RIGHT OR WRONG.—But the main problem, technically, is whether the adverb “to day” [*sēmeron*, “this day,” or “today”] qualifies “say,” or “shalt be.” If it qualifies “say,” all is harmonious; but if it qualifies “shalt be,” there is sharp discord with the rest of Scripture. We would stress the point that there were absolutely no punctuation marks in the original. And as punctuation marks were not introduced until many centuries after the New Testament was written, it is evident that *the punctuation of the Bible is therefore entirely human and variable, and not inspired*. But that is not all. The meaning of a text may be completely changed by the wrong position of a comma. Take for example: “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12).

If the comma is wrongly placed after “*sins*,” the passage says that Jesus “for ever sat down on the right hand of God”—and thus will never come again to this world. But when it is rightly placed after “*for ever*,” then the passage says that after Christ had offered Himself as the final, once-for-all sacrifice, He then “sat down on the right hand of God; . . . *till* his enemies be made his footstool,” when He returns at His second advent.

Similarly with Luke 23:43. If the comma be placed *after* “to day,” the text is in harmony with the rest of Scripture, and no longer teaches that the thief went to Heaven that day to be with Christ—who, be it again noted, did not ascend until some forty-three days after the crucifixion. It is thus obvious that punctuation is a definite factor in exegesis. And in this instance (of Luke 23:43) the comma makes the exegesis contradictory and controvertive. In fact, it is, instead, an unwitting case of eisegesis. But one part of God’s Word must never be arrayed against another.

2. PLACING OF COMMA DETERMINES MEANING.—We now

present the problem sentence in three contrasting forms: (1) as it appeared originally, that is, without any man-made punctuation; (2) as it appears in the A.V. and most English translations, and is made to support the Innate-Immortality concept, because of the position of the comma, injected by the Immortal-Soulist translators, *between* "thee" and "to day"; and (3) as the sentence is punctuated with the comma *following* "to day." Thus the text conforms to the general teaching of Scripture. In this way, by the simple shifting of the man-made comma, harmony, beauty, and truth are re-established. Compare the three:

- (1) "Verily I say unto thee to day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 (2) "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 (3) "*Verily I say unto thee to day, Shalt thou be with me in paradise.*"

We need have no hesitation in shifting the comma from the place in which the human transcribers and translators saw fit to place it—when it avoids the contradiction of a doctrine God has so clearly revealed. And there is no rule of the Greek language to prevent the placing of the comma after, instead of before, "to day," when so required to avoid a contradiction. And the Scriptures themselves demand just that in order to preserve the unity of the Word.

V. Determining Evidences on the Technical Side

This particular text (Luke 23:43) differs from all other problem texts in that it presents a technical side, involving not merely semantics (or the question of meanings of terms and the signification of the inspired words or forms), but also (1) the mechanical element of punctuation, which is purely man made, and was not in any way a part of the original manuscripts; (2) the position of the Greek adverb *sēmeron* ("to-day," or "this day"). First note the matter of punctuation.

1. PUNCTUATION BASED ENTIRELY ON HUMAN AUTHORITY.

—Punctuation, as we have it today, was entirely absent in the original New Testament Greek manuscripts. The earliest manuscripts (the Rylands Fragment and the Bodmer Papyri) have only an occasional dot, or point, on a level with the top of the letters, sometimes a space. The text continues without any divisions between letters or words until manuscripts of the ninth century, when in the Codex Augiensis (in Cambridge) a single point appears separating each word—this dot being placed in the middle of the line. Often it was omitted.

Inasmuch as none of our modern marks of punctuation appeared until the ninth century, it is therefore evident that the punctuation of all modern editions of the Greek Text ¹ rests entirely on human authority.² It was the work of transcribers and translators, inserted in accordance with their best judgment, but influenced at times by their theological concepts. Punctuation, as we know it, therefore has no rightful weight in determining, or even influencing, the interpretation of a single passage. (Nor is there authority for capital letters.) *Consequently no legitimate argument can be made on the position of the comma in Luke 23:43.* Rather, it is to be placed where it comports with the demands of Scripture.

2. PUNCTUATION NOT INTRODUCED TILL TIME OF RENAISSANCE.—And, as stated, there is no rule of the Greek language that determines the placing of a comma. It must be placed so as to be in harmony with the general tenor of the Word, and so as not to produce a conflict in its teachings. One part must never be arrayed against another. Modern punctuation, developed after the introduction of printing, was attributed to Aldus Manutius, learned printer of Venice, of the fifteenth century. So these markings are destitute of any determining authority. Punctuation, we must therefore conclude, has

¹ The dating of the leading printed editions of the Greek text are: Erasmus (1516), Stephens (1546-1549), Beza (1624), Elzevir (1624), Griesbach (1774-1775), Scholz (1830-1836), Lachmann (1831-1850), Tischendorf (1841-1872), Tregelles (1856-1872), Alford (1862-1871), Wordsworth (1870), Reviser's Text (1881), Westcott and Hort (1881-1903), Scrivener (1886), Weymouth (1886), Nestle (1904)—*Companion Bible*, Appendix 94, p. 136.

² George R. Berry, editor of *Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament*, says, "There is no authority anywhere for the punctuation." "We are anxious that our readers should remember that [even] paragraphs have no authority" (Introduction, p. ii).

no weight whatever in determining the original intent of a single passage.

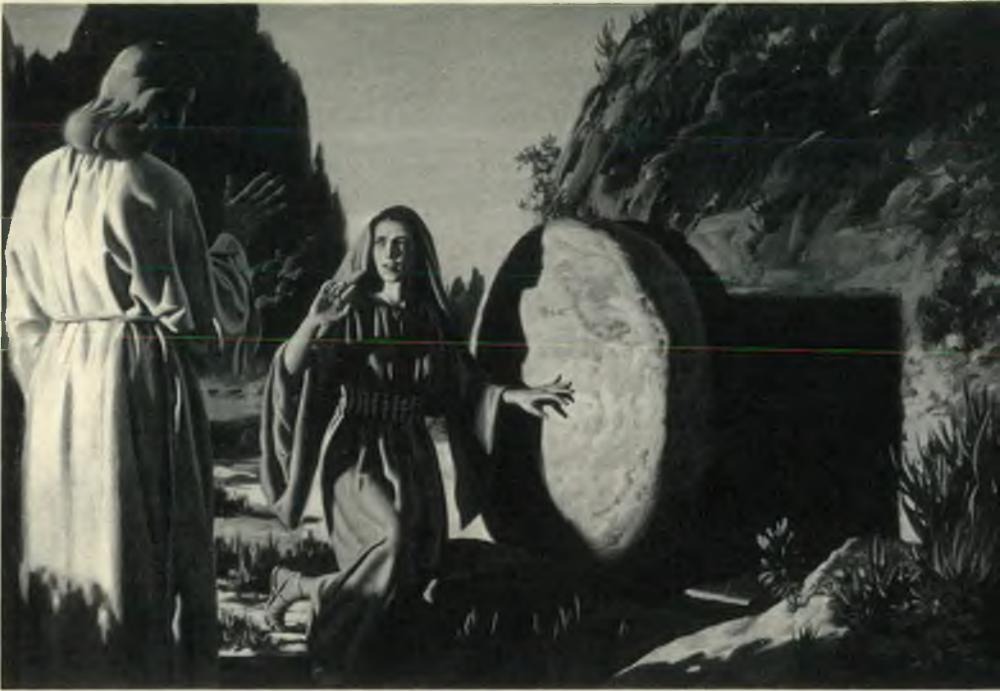
3. RELATIONSHIP OF GREEK ADVERB "SEMERON" TO PROBLEM.—It should also be borne in mind that the Greek adverb *sēmeron* ("today") stands between the verbs *legō* ("I say") and *esē* ("you will be"), and might apply to either. It is also to be noted that this adverb, *sēmeron* ("today," or better, "on this day"), occurs in the Septuagint Old Testament and the Greek New Testament 259 times. It is used as an adjective 24 times, and without a verb to qualify, 14 times. Of the remaining 221 times, it *precedes* the verb it qualifies 51 times but *follows* it 170 times.

Thus even from the angle of usage the preponderance is in favor of placing the comma *after* "today." It is also to be noted that *legō soi* ("I say to thee") is reversed in the Tischendorf and Tregelles texts to *soi legō* ("to thee I say"). But these are side lights.

In Luke 23:43 the "to day" should be connected with the Hebraism, "I say to thee," to emphasize the solemnity of the occasion, not with the "shalt thou be." Thus, instead of merely a *remembrance* of the penitent when Christ should come into His kingdom, Jesus pledges a *presence and participation*, then, in association with Himself. This explains why Jesus seemingly did not answer the penitent's request merely on its own terms. It embraced much more.

The thief was not concerned primarily with *when* he would reach Paradise, but *whether* he would have a place in Christ's kingdom—not *when* but *whether*. Jesus' answer was an assurance that however undeserving he might be, or however impossible it might appear for the dying Jesus to bring His promise to pass, he was assuredly to be there. Indeed, it was Christ's presence and approaching death on the cross that assured the fruition of such a hope.

Thus the problem text (Luke 23:43) harmonizes with the many texts of the Old Testament, declaring, "I say to you this day, . . ."; "I testify to you this day, . . ."; et cetera.



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Christ's Empty Tomb Is Our Assurance of Life. Because Christ Died We Need Not Die. Because He Rose We Too Shall Live.

See Deuteronomy 6:6; 7:11; 8:1; 10:13; 11:8, 13, 28; 13:18; 19:9; 27:4; 31:2, et cetera, where it is to be particularly noted, *the Septuagint corresponds to the usage in Luke 23:43*. Here are two examples from the Septuagint:

“I command thee *this day*, to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his ordinances” (Deut. 30:16).

“I declare to you *this day*, that ye shall surely perish” (Deut. 30:18).

Moses did not mean that they should surely perish that day, but that they would surely perish if they turned away from the Lord.

VI. Most Sublime Episode of Christ's Redemptive Career

And now, with the evidence all before us, picture the scene again. Jesus had for three years been preaching to the listening multitudes concerning His coming kingdom of glory. A part in that kingdom had been promised to all His fol-

lowers. But now the powers of death pressed in around Him. Darkness and failure seemed destined to triumph, crushing down His lofty promises to the depressing prospects of the grave. He who was to have been king in the coming triumph was now expiring in agony and reproach. Moreover, His innermost disciples had forsaken Him and fled. None stood with Him in the crisis hour. Never had the outlook seemed so bleak and blasted.

1. **RECOGNIZED IN JESUS THE COMING KING.**—But it was amid that enshrouding darkness that divine illumination flashed into the mind of that stricken thief on the adjoining cross. Conviction of the truthfulness of Jesus' claims as the Messiah, the Son of God, pierced his heart. He had seen the superscription upon Christ's cross, "The King of the Jews." He recognized in the outcast, anguished Jesus, the King of the coming age. He realized that Jesus must first be resurrected, as He claimed He would be, if He were to reign as king. Nevertheless, vaulting all obstacles, and accepting Christ for what He claimed to be, the penitent then and there placed his trust and his future into the hands of the dying Jesus.

"Lord," he petitioned, "remember me" in the day when Thou comest into Thy triumph and glory—"when thou comest into [possession of] thy kingdom." It is one of the highest acts of faith ever recorded. And then it was that Jesus, the suffering Saviour, the cross-nailed Christ, in the hearing of that mocking, jeering multitude, majestically declared, "Verily, I say unto thee *today*"—*today*, in this My hour of darkness and shame and agony, when the cross is seemingly defeating all My claims; *today*, amid all these forlorn prospects and blighted hopes, so far as the natural eye can see—"Verily, I say unto thee *today*, *Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise*," the new-earth home of the saints, with Me—yes, "*with*" Me—when My kingdom shall indeed be established in triumph and glory forevermore!

2. **SYMBOL OF MULTITUDES IN EARTH'S ELEVENTH HOUR.**—Such is the beauty and force of these words of our Lord, uttered

toward the close of that crucifixion day. But the scattered disciples missed their impact, for they had fled, and had heard them not. And the taunting multitude paid no heed. Only the penitent thief heard and understood their import. Now, in the light of that act of faith, no separating veil of darkness could long becloud Christ's vision. His agony over the feared forsaking by His Father (Matt. 27:46) passed. His prophetic foresight penetrated the physical darkness (27:45) and fixed itself upon the destined coming victory over death. Lifted up from the earth on Calvary's cross (John 3:14, 15), He had drawn one of His companion sufferers unto salvation and life in that climactic hour. He died with His trust in His Father (Luke 23:46).

In this last convert ere He died—symbol of multitudes who would yet believe, many of them in the eleventh hour of human history (Matt. 20:6-16)—He saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied (Isa. 53:11). He was comforted by the faith of a penitent thief. And the sharer of the suffering of Golgotha would be with Him in Paradise restored, and that forever. Such is the grandeur of that day—the thief and the King side by side, and the thief not ashamed of the Crucified One, of whom apostles were ashamed; the thief trusting in the One whom His closest disciples had temporarily ceased to trust.

3. PROBLEM REMOVED BY SHIFT OF COMMA.—Thus by the simple shifting of the man-made comma—misplaced many centuries too late by the misguided translators because of their Platonic misconceptions—the problem of this text is removed, harmony is established with the general tenor of Scripture, and the beauty and significance of that majestic utterance stands out in its true grandeur in one of the most sublime episodes of Christ's redemptive career on earth. Christ died, conscious of the trust of His fellow sufferer on the adjoining cross. And because He died, the thief will live forevermore in the coming kingdom.

4. BEWARE OF PUTTING FALSEHOOD ON LIPS OF CHRIST.—Let us beware lest we commit the audacious act of putting

upon the lips of Truth Incarnate, in the solemn hour before death, a mocking echo of the lie of Eden, which He came to confute and expose. Let us be on our guard lest we place the dying Son of God in the unthinkable position of offering a mocking hope to the repentant thief—of being together somewhere that day, in some Platonic, Jewish, papal, or Protestant paradise—a deception that would not only be totally untrue but utterly repugnant to Jesus, the inerrant and impeccable embodiment and exponent of truth.

That would be a sacrilegious, yes, a mendacious act, fearful in its implications, and for which the perpetrator would assuredly be held accountable. Never should we forget the solemn dictum of Holy Writ, "It was impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18), and the paralleling truth that He never deceives. Christ would never reverse the infallible utterance of Eden that He came to sustain.

Christ Portrays Doom of Wicked as Utter Destruction

I. Seventeen Graphic Illustrations of Doom of Wicked

In concluding the witness of Christ, let us examine His inerrant testimony on the fate of the wicked. Christ ever "taught them as one having authority," and "not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:29; cf. John 7:26). These learned men always deferred and referred to tradition or to what some noted teacher had said. But Christ—Creator, Saviour, Priest, Judge, and returning King—is the supreme authority of all time in this field. He knows man's frame and man's destiny. He cannot err and will not mislead. Let us reverently hear and believe His witness. Here is what He says:

I. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM INANIMATE LIFE.—Jesus gave seventeen graphic illustrations, drawn from both inanimate and animate life, to portray comprehensively the doom of the wicked. They are strikingly conclusive. (Some are repeated, evidently for emphasis.) Christ's terse allusions were both vivid and inescapable. They divide themselves into two all-encompassing groups. Here is the initial group, in their English rendering. In eight different figures Christ declares the single truth.

A house built on sand *falls* (Matt. 7:26, 27).

Tares are gathered and *burned* (Matt. 13:30, 40).

Bad fish are *cast away* (v. 48).

Harmful plants are *rooted up* (15:13).

Worthless trees are *cut down* (Luke 13:7).

Withered branches are *burned* (John 15:6).
 Debtor is held in *prison* (Matt. 5:26; 18:34).¹
 Offender is *cast into outer darkness* (8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

In each case (save the last two, given for another purpose) the destruction is declared complete, leading to utter and final disintegration. The doom of the wicked was never portrayed by Christ as an endless life in torment. The "tree which bringeth not forth good fruit," He declares, "is *hewn down, and cast into the fire*" (Matt. 3:10). That signifies its final and *complete destruction and disappearance*.

2. SECOND GROUP BASED ON HUMAN LIFE.—In His second group of illustrations, based upon *human life*—thus obviating any misunderstanding or evasion—the Master declares:

The wicked husbandmen are *destroyed* (Matt. 21:41; Luke 20:16).
 The rejector is *ground to powder, scattered as dust* (Matt. 21:44).
 The evil servant is *cut asunder* (Matt. 24:51).
 The wicked will *perish* like the Galileans (Luke 13:2, 3).
 They are *slain like those crushed* by Siloam's tower (vs. 4, 5).
 They are *destroyed* like the victims of the Flood (17:27).
 They are *destroyed by fire* like men of Sodom and Gomorrah (17:29).
 They will *die*, as in the fate of Lot's wife (17:32).
 The rebellious "citizens" are *slain* (19:14, 27).

These portrayals, individually and collectively, all denote capital punishment. They signify sudden, swift, violent *death*—attended with greater or less suffering. They are set forth as fit illustrations of the coming second death for the stubbornly recalcitrant sinner.

3. ALL PORTRAY TOTAL AND FINAL EXTINCTION.—Thus of the seventeen different illustrations employed by the Saviour to depict the doom of the wicked, all but two portray utter

¹ The debtor, *cast into prison* (Matt. 5:26; 18:34), indicates that the debt is inescapable and irrevocable. And the offender *cast into outer darkness* (Matt. 7:12; 22:13; 25:30) indicates that there is weeping and gnashing of teeth—conscious suffering. (Weeping and gnashing of teeth is used seven times by Christ—Matt. 8:12; 13:42; 13:50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.) The "gnashing of teeth" precedes the lapsing into final unconsciousness. But Jesus does not say this gnashing and weeping is without end. We repeat: There is nothing to suggest *endless continuance* in either case. The total evidence of Scripture rebuts such an inference. All, both animate and inanimate evil things, come to final retribution. The doom of Gehenna, for the unrepentant sinner, is final and irrevocable, ending in total destruction.

and ultimate *destruction*, or *dissolution*, under the second death, whereas the other two indicate the *certainty* of that doom. Here is a case in point: "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? . . . He will miserably *destroy* [*apollumi*] those wicked men" (Matt. 21:40, 41).

According to the witness of Christ, then, there is eternity of *result* but not of *process*, of *punishment* but not of *punishing* of men. *Apollumi* and *apōleia* and the cognate Greek terms Christ employs all involve complete destruction.

The lesson is obvious: As rivers separated from their source, as trees with neither roots nor branches, as dry bundles of tares, as corpses eaten by worms, so the incorrigibly wicked will go to destruction in Gehenna—the refuse heap, as it were, of lost men. Christ asserts, then, without qualifications, the final and total extinction of the entire man in fire that cannot be quenched, as the fate of the impenitent.

II. Christ's Meaning of "Eternal" Fire, Punishment, Damnation

Christ thrice speaks of the doom of the wicked as being, or involving, something "eternal." His three important warning statements are:

(1) Mark 3:29—"He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost . . . is in danger of *eternal damnation*² [*aiōniou kriseōs*, "eternal judgment"]."

(2) Matt. 25:46—"These shall go away into *everlasting punishment* [*kolasin aiōnion*]: but the righteous into *life eternal* [*zōēn aiōnion*]." (Cf. Paul, 2 Thess. 1:9.)

(3) Matt. 25:41—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting fire* [*to pur to aiōnion*], prepared for the devil and his angels."

In the first instance there is a distinct and consummating *act*, coupled with endless duration of *result*—the sentence being everlasting in its *consequences*. It is the sin that throughout the ages remains unpardoned.³ In the second, the "punishment"

² Some manuscripts read "eternal sin."

³ See R. F. Weymouth, *New Testament in Modern Speech* (3d ed.), Mark 3:29, n. 10.



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The Conflict of the Ages Has Been Between Satan, the Rebel and Source of Evil, and Christ, the Creator and Redeemer, Judge and Coming King.

and the suffering are not identical—the *punishment* is likewise eternal in its *effects* whereas the *suffering* ends in utter abolition, or cessation, of being. And in the third, the fire is called “everlasting” because its *results* are everlasting. It is not simply *a* fire, but “*the* fire”—*the one* “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). It ends in destruction and ashes.

1. MEANING DETERMINED BY NOUN TO WHICH ATTACHED. —In each of these passages the Greek word for “everlasting,” or “eternal,” is the adjective *aiōnios*—derived from the noun *aiōn*, an “age” or “era”—the word itself leaving the time limit of the age undefined. The late Bishop H. C. G. Moule, of Durham, in his *Outline of Christian Doctrine*, soundly declared that the term of duration expressed by *aiōnios* must *always be sought in the noun to which it is attached*, not in the modifying

aiōnios itself. Therefore, to determine its true meaning we must carefully trace its usage in Scripture, and seek out the noun it modifies.

God, and things divine, are incontestably endless—thus involving the full and unrestricted meaning. But earthly things will not last beyond the earth in its present age or form. Thus the *aiōnion* Mosaic statutes and the *aiōnion* Aaronic priesthood belonged to a passing dispensation—and ceased. The adjective *aiōnios* there obviously stood for a limited time only—“age long”—the noun it modified determining the term of duration.

On the contrary, “life eternal” (*zōēn aiōnion*), for the righteous, is used more than forty times. That life will be unending. But in contrast, the runaway slave, Onesimus (Philemon 15), who was to serve his master “for ever” (likewise *aiōnion*), was to serve only as long as he lived. Clearly the substantive, or noun, determines the meaning.

2. DIVINE ACTIONS OR ACTIVITIES MAY BE TERMINABLE.—Christ clearly taught that divine conditions or Persons abide unendingly, whereas divine *actions* or *activities* may be terminable, for example, *punishment* (Matt. 25:46); *judgment* (Heb. 6:2); *sin* (Mark 3:29); *destruction* (2 Thess. 1:9); *salvation* (Heb. 5:9); *redemption* and *fire* (Matt. 18:8; 25:41; Jude 7). These expressions obviously do not mean endless punishing, judging, sinning, destroying, saving, redeeming. Endless salvation is not endless *saving*, but represents a completed work of grace.

The fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah was not endless in its *process*, but was completely endless in its *results*. The “unquenchable fire” that “burns up” the chaff, will not keep that chaff forever burning. Again we see that the noun to which the modifying *aiōnios* is attached, automatically determines the unlimited or the limited meaning—such as “eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15), or “everlasting [eternal] gospel” (Rev. 14:6).

Thus in Matthew 25:46 the living state of the righteous is

endless, and the death-punishment state, or condition, of the wicked, produced by the *process* of destruction, is a *death state* as endless as the contrasting *life state* is endless. But the process is not eternal, only the *result*. We must therefore concur with Bishop Moule and other recognized scholars that the noun to which *aiōnios* is attached is the determinative factor. In one case it is terminable; in another it is interminable.

III. Christ's Explicit Teachings on "Hell" Examined

In considering the ultimate destiny and doom of the wicked, we must likewise note Christ's definitive teachings on Hell. Confusion in understanding was introduced, at the time of translation, by the unfortunate rendering into the one English word *Hell*, the three different Greek words, *Gehenna*, *hadēs*, and *Tartaros* (from *tartarōo*), although each has a wholly separate and distinctive meaning. (Christ, however, does not Himself deal with *Tartaros*. That appears only once, and then in verbal form, in 2 Peter 2:4, and is considered in chapter 20, pp. 383-385.)

Singularly enough, the most striking and forceful language in the entire Bible as regards Hell and the punishment of the wicked, fell from the lips of Christ Himself. Nevertheless, these expressions are entirely compatible with His character as Incarnate Love. It is only when invested with the theological deviations of the centuries that they take on the terror and cruelty that is as foreign to Christ's own heart as they are a distortion of the language He used. John 3:16 presents the simple but comprehensive dual truth of God's tender love and His holy judgment. To "perish" (*apollumi*) means nothing less than the "destruction" unquestionably taught in Scripture. It is the terminus of the "wide gate" and the "broad way," against which He warned.

1. TWO TERMS USED BY CHRIST.—We now turn to the two terms used by Christ.

- (1) *Gehenna*, or the "hell fire" ("Gehenna of fire")

(Matt. 5:22; 18:9), Christ used to describe the place of future, final punishment of the wicked. *Gehenna*, *Gē Hinnom*, or the Valley of Hinnom, was a ravine south of the city of Jerusalem. According to tradition, it was a place of fire and destruction for refuse. Fires were kept burning constantly, and maggots bred freely and fed upon the filthy and putrefying carcasses. Such was the familiar figure used by Christ for the coming destruction of all the unclean things of the universe. It symbolized the coming "lake of fire" mentioned in Revelation. Dr. R. F. Weymouth, in a note on Matthew 5:22, states:

"*Gehenna of Fire Or 'Hell.'* The severest punishment inflicted by the Jews upon any criminal. The corpse (after the man had been stoned to death) was thrown out into the Valley of Hinnom (*Gē Hinnom*) and was devoured by the worm or the flame."⁴

(2) *Hadēs* (Gr. equivalent of Heb. *she'ōl*) is recorded as used by Christ only three times: in His condemnation of Capernaum (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15); in His reply to Peter's confession (Matt. 16:18); and in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:23). The parable of the rich man and Lazarus has already been treated, and the rest of the New Testament usages of *hadēs* will be noted separately later.

2. CHRIST'S SPECIFIC TEACHINGS ON GEHENNA.—Christ's allusions to Gehenna occur in seven passages—the only other New Testament reference being in James 3:6. We note them here:

- (1) Matt. 5:22—"shall be in danger of *hell fire*"
- (2) 5:29, 30 (2)—"that thy whole body should be cast into *hell*"
- (3) 10:28—"able to destroy both soul and body in *hell*"
- (4) Luke 12:5—"Fear him, which . . . hath power to cast into *hell*"
- (5) Matt. 18:8, 9—"Cast into everlasting fire"; "cast into *hell fire*"
- (6) Mark 9:43, 45, 47—"go into *hell*"; "cast into *hell*"; "cast into *hell fire*"
- (7) Matt. 23:15, 33—"twofold more the child of *hell*"; "How can ye escape the damnation of *hell*?"

(In each case the "hell" is from *Gehenna*.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, Matt. 5:22, n. 12.

3. EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE SEVEN TEXTS.—Under No. 1 (Matt. 5:22), Dean Alford states that there were three degrees of guilt: First, those coming under the cognizance of the local synagogue council of three; then came those of the supreme council or Sanhedrin—meted out by the sword, or stoning, and often followed by the disgrace of the fire of Gehenna. And after the first two came the final Gehenna of the fire (*tēn geennan tou puros*, “hell of fire”), wherein the corpse of the malefactor was cast into the Valley of Hinnom, to be devoured by the worm and reduced to ashes by flame—an intensification of the horrors of simple death. But the final punishment in each case was death.

Under No. 2 (Matt. 5:29, 30) is stressed the preference of the perishing of an eye (choicest possession), or hand, to that of the whole body when cast into the Gehenna of fire.

In No. 3 (Matt. 10:28) the killing of soul and body is man’s complete abolition, or destruction. *Apollumi*, and its cognate *apōleia*, translated into English as “destruction” or “perdition,” gives us the key to our Lord’s meaning. And this is corroborated by Peter and Paul, each of whom gives self-interpreting passages in which they use the terms “destroy” and “perish.” Christ first cites the terrible fate of the Galileans who *perished* under Pilate. Then He warns, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise *perish* [*apollumi*]” (Luke 13:3). Next He adds the episode of those *killed* by the falling of the tower of Siloam. And again He warns, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise *perish* [*apollumi*]” (vs. 4, 5).

Such is the doom for the impenitent—swift, tragic, fatal, complete. Be it noted, however, that there is not a syllable about being kept alive forever in endless conscious torment. Peter subsequently said to Simon Magnus—when he offered money in an endeavor to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit for his own use—“Thy money *perish* [*apollumi*] with thee” (Acts 8:20). The doom of both Simon and his money was destruction.

No. 5 (Matt. 18:8, 9) stresses the preference for entering

into the resurrection life, or life eternal, rather than being cast into "everlasting fire" (v. 8), or "hell fire" (v. 9)—the Gehenna of fire.

In No. 6 (Mark 9:43-48) Christ four times speaks of those who "go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (v. 43). This is repeated in verses 45 and 46 as the fire that shall never be quenched. It is the same expression used by John the Baptist, who spoke of the Coming One as gathering the "wheat into the garner; but he will *burn up* [*katakaiō*] the chaff with *unquenchable fire* [*puri asbestō*]" (Matt. 3:12). The rendering "unquenchable fire" is unfortunately translated. It is fire that "shall not be quenched."

The inspired New Testament interpretation of *pur aiōnios* is given by Jude, who describes the judgments that overtook Sodom and Gomorrah, as "set forth for an example," of "suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire*" (Jude 7). Jude joins the experience of Sodom and Gomorrah with that of the Israelites who died in the wilderness, and of Korah and his companions who were swallowed up by an earthquake. These all signified total destruction.

4. INSPIRED KEY TO EXPRESSION "ETERNAL FIRE."—Then to these Peter parallels the words: God, "turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into *ashes* condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6). Then he adds, "The Lord knoweth how . . . to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (v. 9). So the "*eternal fire*" (*pur aiōnios*) is not still feeding on its victims, for the waters of the Dead Sea mark the site of the cities whose inhabitants perished in the dreadful flames. Thus the "eternal" of Jude is not an endless process but a result. This is the inspired key to the tremendous phrase "*eternal fire*."

The "unquenchable fire" of Matthew 3:12 will "*burn up*" (*katakaiō*) entirely the chaff. And nothing is more swiftly consumed than chaff. It creates a blaze that nothing can extinguish until its work is done. Then, the chaff burned up, the fire ceases

for lack of material to feed on. Consequently, the example of Sodom and Gomorrah signifies the total destruction and disappearance of the thing consumed. The *pur aiōnios* and *asbestos*, which do the obliterating work, are the Master's definitive description of the fires of Gehenna.

And the undying worm and the quenchless flame feed upon their victims until the whole is consumed. Thus again the work of the "worm" and the "fire" are eternal in *results*, but not in process or duration. Hence we must distinguish sharply between Hell as Gehenna, the place of final doom and the *second* death, in contrast with Hades, the place of the dead (gravedom) between death and the resurrection.

5. NOT MISERY BUT "DESTRUCTION" IS ETERNAL.—As to the punishment of the wicked, be it noted that it is neither the sinfulness nor the misery of which the eternity is predicted (Matt. 25:41, 46). It is the *punishment*—"kolasis" (v. 46)—the *endless result*, not the transitory penal *process*. It is the eternal effect of *the divine act of cutting off from life*. It is the penal deprivation of what otherwise might be enjoyed, the forfeiture of its joys and privileges. This is specifically the *death penalty* for sin, everywhere set forth in God's Word from Genesis to Revelation—the wicked shall be punished with "everlasting *destruction*" (2 Thess. 1:9). That is the punishment of Matthew 25:46.

Here, then, is the contrast—not the incidence of happiness or misery but the *life* that is awarded to the righteous, in contradistinction to the *deprivation of that life*, the cutting off, the extinction, the capital punishment by death of the other. And both are here declared to be equally final and irreversible. "Everlasting *punishment*" is clearly not the same as being everlastingly punished. It is eternal loss of being.

Such is the testimony of Christ, the Supreme Witness of all time, and the Infallible Authority in the realm of the nature and destiny of man. Whoso controverts His inerrant dictums must settle it with his Lord.



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IV. "Hades"—True Understanding Based on NT Usage, Not Pagan-Romanist

1. PAGAN ORIGIN AND INFLUENCE OF "HADES."—While the Hebrew word *she'ól*⁵ (gravedom) comes to us largely from Old Testament Scripture, the Greek equivalent, *hadēs*, is of pagan origin, and came down to New Testament times tinctured with centuries of pagan tradition. It is essential that this fact be borne in mind.

More than that, the term *hadēs* reached the modern Christian church tinctured with the ideas of a divergent Judaism and Romanism. That is the second significant fact. The New Testament meaning of *hadēs* must be drawn neither from the human imaginations of the heathen nor from the later traditions of the Jews and Romanists. Instead, the true meaning must be derived from the actual *usage* of *hadēs*, as it appears in the New Testament, compared and checked with the Old Testament usage of *she'ól*.

2. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS MOLDED BY ROMANIST BACK-
GROUNDS.—In the original pagan sense, *hadēs* was used by Homer to designate the god of the unseen, in the nether world. Later it came to mean the abode of departed spirits. The Vulgate renders *hadēs* by *infernum* (the lower regions).

Ever since the rise of Romanism Hell has been popularly considered as the place for punishing departed spirits. But according to Scripture, *hadēs* and *gehenna* are not identical. There is no confusion in the original tongue. The confusion came through the English rendering of both words as "hell." Here again traditional backgrounds have exerted their molding influence upon translation.

⁵ *She'ól* occurs 65 times—rendered as "grave" (35), as "hell" (27), and as "pit" (3). See Part I, pp. 160-165. Therein lies the key.

Despised and Rejected by Those He Came to Save, Christ
Went to Calvary. His Death Changed Our Death Into a
Sleep and His Resurrection Brought Immortality to Light
and Reality.

As noted elsewhere, *gehenna* occurs twelve times in the New Testament,⁶ and is uniformly rendered "hell" in the A.V., R.V., and A.R.V. In the Vulgate it is transliterated Gehenna. And Gehenna exactly fits the modern concept of Hell—a place of burning, especially for the punishment of the wicked—except that *Gehenna* is not presently active, but is simply the coming lake of fire.

3. HADES CONNECTED WITH DEATH, NEVER WITH LIFE.—*Hadēs* occurs 11 times in the New Testament,⁷ and is rendered "hell" in every case save one (1 Cor. 15:55, where margin is "hell." The Koine and the Syriac give *hadēs* here.). Hades is invariably connected with *death*, never with *life*; always with dead persons, never with the living. *Hadēs* is also the place of "corruption" (Acts 2:31; cf. 13:34-37), from which resurrection is the only exit.

4. HADES CLEARLY THE GRAVE, OR GRAVEDOM.—The Hebrew *she'ol* of the Old Testament is the equivalent of the Greek *hadēs* of the New Testament and both are identical or synonymous with the grave, or gravedom, the *state of death*. That is the inescapable witness of Scripture. And only with such an understanding can we deal safely with any particular single passage of Scripture, for the meaning of death does not vary in the two great divisions of the Word. And, equally important, the general sense must govern the interpretation of any individual disputed passage.

The New Testament expressly states that in death the individual, the person, *rests in the grave*. Thus "devout men carried *Stephen* to his burial, and made great lamentation over him" (Acts 8:2). *Stephen* was in the grave, not in Heaven. Peter, likewise speaking under inspiration, said of the eminent Old Testament believer David, "David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). But the supreme example is Christ.

⁶ Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

⁷ The eleven occurrences of *hadēs* in the New Testament are: Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14. The R.V. always transliterates it "hades," except in 1 Corinthians 15:15, where it is rendered "death."

Be it remembered that the death of Christ was identical with the death of His people, whether before His resurrection or since.

Christ tasted death for us all (Heb. 2:9). And Scripture speaks of His death and that of His people as one and the same in kind. Apart from the atoning aspect, only in one respect did they differ—and that does not concern the *nature* of the state in death. That difference was the *duration* of the death state. Christ's death was for so short a time that His "flesh" did not "see corruption" (Acts 2:27, 31). And even this distinction was noted in prophecy (Ps. 16:10; cf. Acts 2). But Christ's death was itself the same as that of all of His followers. And in that death Christ went into *hadēs* (the grave, gravedom, or realm of death), and remained there until His resurrection.

And, we repeat, as with Him so with us.

5. ALL SOULS REMAIN IN GRAVEDOM UNTIL RESURRECTION.—The very nature of the resurrection attests, beyond doubt, that each one of Christ's people is in *hadēs* (gravedom, realm of death) until the resurrection. That was affirmed by Peter at Pentecost. And the apostle Paul succinctly declares that the resurrection of Christ was like that of His believing people (Rom. 6:5; 1 Cor. 15:20-23). It therefore follows that upon resurrection, Christ's people come out of *hadēs*, or gravedom, just as Christ came out of *hadēs* (gravedom) upon His resurrection.

It is explicitly affirmed by Paul, in his description of the resurrection of believers (in 1 Cor. 15), that *hadēs* continues to retain its power over those entering its domain, until the Second Advent and its attendant resurrection. In fact, in Paul's exclamation in 1 Corinthians 15:55 ("O death, where is thy sting? O grave [*hadēs*], where is thy victory?"), he was but paraphrasing from Hosea, who wrote, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave [*she'ōl*], I will be thy destruction" (Hosea 13:14)—with only such change as would comport with the New Testament diction.

6. GRAVEDOM: PLACE OF REPOSE THROUGHOUT DEATH-SLEEP.—Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 is reiterated by our Lord in the Apocalypse:

"Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [*hadēs*] and of death" (Rev. 1:17, 18).

This teaching is unequivocal. Christ died, and He was placed in the grave (*hadēs*). Then follows the resurrection, when He left *hadēs* (gravedom). He then comforts the believers with the assurance, "I have the keys of *hadēs* and of death." That is, "I will open *hadēs* [gravedom] for My people, even as I opened it for Myself." So *hadēs* is clearly the state of death, identical with gravedom. It should also be noted that in the Apocalypse death and *hadēs* are thrice thrown together:

"I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell [*hadēs*] followed with him" (Rev. 6:8).

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [*hadēs*, margin, "the grave"] delivered up the dead which were in them" (chap. 20:13).

"And death and hell [*hadēs*] were cast into the lake of fire" (v. 14).'

Hadēs is not a dwelling place of departed *living* souls. According to Holy Writ it is the place of repose for the dead during their death sleep. This is uniform and conclusive.

V. Problem Text (Mark 9:43-48): "Their Worm Dieth Not"

Much stress is placed by some upon the triple use by Christ Himself, in six short verses (Mark 9:43-48), of the expression "their worm dieth not." But "their worm" is not a soul, only a maggot (*skōlēx*), feeding upon a *dead* body—and *not inhabiting a living one*. Here is pictured the revolting end of a corpse flung out on the refuse heap. It is an awesome warning to all beholders—standing for dissolution, disintegration, with final disappearance. But it is not the process or duration but the result that is here emphasized.

The "worm" that "dieth not" is, like the "unquenchable fire," a symbol of *death*. So long as the *corpse* or carcass (cf. Isa. 66:24), which is completely insensible, is gnawed by the worm, it cannot live again. If the worm never dies, there will be no possibility of life revitalizing the corpse. It thus excludes all hope of restoration. There is nothing here about the "sting of an accusing conscience," as often claimed. There are no "perpetual torments" or "endless sufferings" here, or elsewhere in the Sacred Text—any more than there are "immortal souls."

The worm causes no suffering to the carcass, which is insensible. It simply hastens the disappearance of what has ceased to live, and partially "replaces the gravedigger," as someone has phrased it. And the cremation in the fire that follows pulverizes the bones gnawed by the worm. The worm is essentially a gnawer, a carrion-eating destroyer. So the worm and the fire together actually indicate the utter impossibility of an eternal life in torment. The symbolism may be said to portray the eternal continuance of a state of death and utter extinction for the wicked. Beyond question, these agents of destruction are a figure of the utter impossibility of a return to life after death. In the passage there is not a scintilla of support for the contention of "eternal torment of the damned."

VI. Sin's Punishment Does Not Continue Through All Eternity

The second *death*, as portrayed in Revelation 20 and 21, involves the *termination* of all sinful and estranged life. The punishment of the wicked ends in ultimate dissolution and obliteration, as "fire came down from God out of heaven, and *devoured* [*katesthiō*, "to eat down," denoting utter excision] them" (Rev. 20:9).⁸ And when the "new heaven" and

⁸ "The use in the N.T. of such words as 'death,' 'destruction,' 'fire,' 'perish,' to describe future retribution, point to the likelihood of fearful anguish, followed by extinction of being, as the doom that awaits those who by persistent rejection of the Saviour prove themselves utterly, and therefore irremediably, bad."—Weymouth, *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, Heb. 10:27, n. 1 (ed.).

the "new earth" are established, the Divine Voice from the throne of Omnipotence declares:

"There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the *former things are passed away*" (Rev. 21:4).

This agrees with Paul's declaration, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). Therefore the furiously raging lake of fire will not burn on endlessly, with the wicked eternally alive in torment. Christ did not condone the contention of an eternal dualism. Death itself, along with *hadēs* ("gravedom"), is cast into the lake of fire, denoting the utter end. The death principle itself is abrogated, abolished, and rendered completely and permanently inoperative. It will wholly cease to be. Thus will God ring down the final curtain on sin and death forever. That is Christ's inerrant testimony.

Theologian Paul on Life, Death, and Immortality

I. "Christ Our Life" Is Post-Pentecostal Theme

It was not until after the Holy Spirit was poured out with power upon the apostles and the early disciples of our Lord that their minds were fully opened to perceive the larger scope of the sublime truth of Life Only in Christ. But when they did perceive and receive it fully, and when they knew and experienced the "power of his resurrection" (Phil. 3:10), they were lifted completely out of their former mediocrity and filled with a compulsive power and a zeal that nothing could withstand.

1. PROCLAIMED FIRST TO JEWS, THEN TO GENTILES.—The doctrine of life through Christ was the "unspeakable gift" that they were impelled to make known to all men. This was what the angel first charged Peter and the other apostles to preach when he was released from prison at Jerusalem. Here was his impressive commission, given just after the Jews had killed the Prince of life (Acts 3:15): "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this *life*" (Acts 5:20)—*life* in Christ, stubbornly rejected by the Pharisees, *life* through the resurrection, bitterly opposed by the Sadducees. Jesus' name and the power of His *life* must be made known to all men. This mandate they gladly obeyed.

And this is precisely what Paul and Barnabas preached first to the Jews at Antioch. And when the chosen people re-



R. M. ELDRIDGE, ARTIST

Paul, Pre-eminent Exponent of the Resurrection, Preaching at Athens While Men Mocked and Rejected the Sole Hope of Life to Come. But His Message Lived On, Redeeming and Saving Men Today.

fused to accept Jesus as the promised giver of "this life," the apostles solemnly said:

"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy [by unbelief] of *everlasting life*, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

Turning to the Gentiles, they boldly proclaimed:

"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for *salvation* unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to *eternal life* believed" (vs. 47, 48).

2. PAUL PREACHES WITH FUTILITY TO PLATONIC ATHENIANS.—Paul, the great accession to the apostles' roster, sought to preach this same doctrine to the Athenians. He spoke to them of God as the one who "giveth to all *life*, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). But the minds of the Athenians were so filled with the fanciful notions of the Greek poets and philosophers concerning the spirit world and the Innate Immortality of all souls that they scouted the idea of Immortality solely by a resurrection from the dead through Jesus Christ.

Had he preached to them the Platonic doctrine of a spirit life, an immortal soul, or eternal blessedness or misery for all men forever, they would not have called him "a setter forth of strange gods" (v. 18), and a proclaimer of "new doctrine" (v. 19). That would have been what their own Platonic philosophy had taught them. But the doctrines of the day of judgment and the incredible resurrection of Jesus "from the dead" (v. 31), and of the coming resurrection of all the dead, and of *immortality only through Christ* were no more agreeable to them than they were to the Jews.

3. ROMANS: IMMORTALITY A GIFT THROUGH CHRIST.—This majestic truth runs all through Paul's epistles. It was the mighty cable, as it were, upon which all the other doctrines of the gospel were suspended. Thus to the Romans, Paul preached that all, whether Jews or Gentiles, were under one common sentence of death; for all had "sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Those who had "sinned without law," must "*perish* without law" (Rom. 2:12), while those who had sinned under the law must be judged by the law. Death had "reigned" over all the children of Adam (Rom. 5:14).

But by the grace of God there was hope. The gospel, which he was sent to preach, was "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (chap. 1:16) in Christ, the Life-giver. Specifically—"to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and *immortality* [*aphtharsian*, "incorruption"], *eternal life*" (Rom. 2:7).

To believers he says:

"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the *end* of those things is *death*. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end *everlasting life*. For the *wages* of sin is *death* [the second death]; but the *gift* of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:21-23).

Thus the proclamation of eternal life was central. There is no such thing as either spontaneous generation or spontaneous regeneration. The children of God are "begotten" by God Himself, as verily as the children of Adam are begotten by their natural progenitors. This new life concerns itself not with carnal and perishable things, but with spiritual and eternal things. Those who experience it are "led by the Spirit of God" (Rom. 8:14), and such are destined to be "glorified" (v. 17) through the "resurrection," with its "redemption of our body" (v. 23). They will not come into the "condemnation" of the *second* death (v. 1; chap. 5:16; cf. Rev. 2:11). Nothing will be able to "*separate*" them "from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8:39), by whom and to whom they henceforth live as "heirs" of eternal life.

4. I CORINTHIANS: IMMORTALITY MUST BE "PUT ON."—The same emphasis on eternal life is equally marked in both of Paul's epistles to the Corinthians. In the first epistle he shows how impossible it is for human reason alone to attain any true knowledge of the gospel. How foolish the truth of eternal life through a crucified Saviour seems to natural man—"But the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). But Paul

was "determined" to know nothing among them but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (v. 2), and that through His death and resurrection we might have eternal life.

Finally, coming to the climax of the great and glorious doctrine of the resurrection, Paul dwells upon it at length, and shows how it is assured to us by the death and resurrection of Christ Himself. If this assurance of resurrection through Christ were taken away, we would be of all men the "most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19), for we would then have no hope of any life beyond the grave. All who have fallen asleep in Jesus would have "*perished*" (v. 18), become extinct—not in a state of endless sin and misery. Not a word to that effect.

Paul attempts to tell the nature of the spiritual bodies we shall take on at the resurrection, to show how glorious and how incorruptible they will be, and how entirely different from our gross fleshly bodies (v. 37), which are fitted only for earthly natures, and could not possibly enter the coming kingdom of God.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a *natural* [*psuchikon*] body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a *spiritual* [*pneumatikon*] body"¹ (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

Then Paul shows how, simultaneously with the resurrection of the righteous dead, those who are alive at Christ's second coming will 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 [*aphthartoi*, "immortal"], and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [*thnēton*, "subject to death"]² must put on immortality [*athanasian*]. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (vs. 52-55).

¹ In this life man has "flesh and blood"—a natural body. At death the body reverts to dust, and the spirit returns to God, who gave it (Ps. 31:5; Eccl. 12:7; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59). In the resurrection "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 15:38). Thereafter man no longer has a "natural" body but a "spiritual" body (1 Cor. 15:44).

² *Thnētos*—Rom. 6:12; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54; 2 Cor. 4:11; 5:4.

Mark the form of the expression, "This corruptible must *put on* incorruption, and this mortal must *put on* immortality" (v. 53). Surely if *incorruption*, if *immortality*, must be "*put on*" (*enduō*, "to put on," as a garment), it could not have been possessed before.

5. 2 CORINTHIANS: CENTRAL THEME, CHRIST OUR LIFE.—Paul's second Corinthian epistle is equally filled with Christ and Him crucified, as the source of eternal hope to all His people. The great apostle is determined to know nothing else among them, waiting eagerly for the time when this mortality "might be *swallowed up* [*kata-*

PETER PAUL RUBENS, ARTIST

Christ Paid the Full Penalty for Our Sin, Dying in Our Stead That We Might Receive Back the Life We Forfeited by Transgression.





B. PLOCKHORST, ARTIST

The Tremendous Truth of the Resurrection of Christ Becomes the Pledge of the Resurrection of the Saints of the Ages and the Bestowal of Immortality at Christ's Second Advent.

pinō, “drink down,” “swallow”] of *life*” (2 Cor. 5:4).

6. “ETERNAL LIFE” THEME RUNS THROUGH REMAINING EPISTLES.—And so with all his other epistles, eternal life is the central theme. Note it:

"Reap *life everlasting*" (Gal. 6:8).

"Your *life* is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our *life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3, 4).

"Believe on him to *life everlasting*" (1 Tim. 1:16).

"Lay hold on *eternal life*" (1 Tim. 6:12).

"Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and *immortality* [*aphtharsian*] to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

"In hope of *eternal life*, which God . . . promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

"Heirs according to the hope of *eternal life*" (chap. 3:7).

7. PETER, JAMES, AND JUDE GIVE SAME EMPHASIS.—And it should be added that Peter, James, and Jude follow on, offering salvation with the same "life" line—exhorting all to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

"He shall receive the crown of *life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

"Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto *eternal life*" (Jude 21).

It is life, life, life! But let us examine Paul, and his theology on life and death, more closely.

II. Heart of Pauline Theology—Gift of Life Instead of Destruction

The apostle Paul was unquestionably the most powerful human personality in the history of the Christian church—truly a spiritual and intellectual giant. He was chosen to write a sizable portion of the New Testament. In his writings he gave a more fully developed theology than any other apostle.

He probes the deepest depths and rises to the highest heights of the mighty plan of redemption. He sweeps in all of God's majestic provisions of grace and redemption. He presents the light of salvation for the believer and the darkness of doom for the rejectors of God's grace. One can feel the pulsating heartthrobs throughout his mighty epistles.

1. REDEMPTION OF MAN BRINGS LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.—Paul did not have the privilege of the three years enjoyed by

the other disciples in the school of Christ, the master teacher of life and immortality. Saul the persecutor became Paul the apostle when he encountered Christ in a vision on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). He spent a period of study and readjustment in Arabia (Gal. 1:17). But his teaching is identical with theirs—and that of Jesus—on the nature and destiny of man. In fact, he surpasses other disciples in the fullness, clarity, and depth of his presentations. Paul was clearly God's unique apostle not only to the Gentiles but to the Diaspora as well.

With Paul, Christ was not only the center but the circumference of his preaching and teaching, as well as of his personal faith and life. The essence of his message was humanity redeemed, justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, who by His life, death, and resurrection opened the way and provided the means for man's restoration and his reception of eternal life and Immortality in Christ, bestowed at the resurrection or at translation, at the Second Advent.

2. TREMENDOUS SCOPE OF SALVATION.—The three foundational facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, in their relation to sin and redemption for man, clearly constitute the sum and substance of the teaching and preaching of the great apostle. In his writings there is clarity and certainty in the provision of Life Only in Christ. That is unquestionably the essence of Paul's gospel. Here the highest, broadest, and deepest lessons in the school of grace are set forth. Here is the culmination of revealed apostolic truth. Here is the powerful portrayal of the divine philosophy of salvation in contrast with all human foibles and sophisms.

3. OPENING MESSAGE IS ON ESCHATOLOGY.—Paul wrote the Thessalonian epistles about A.D. 52. These epistles and the Corinthians, written some six years later, are replete with the message of life, death, and Immortality. This was the earliest Pauline emphasis. And Paul was the most explicit and extensive of all the New Testament writers in holding steadfastly to the original Biblical position that man is not naturally immor-



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He Who Ascended to Heaven Will Come Again to Gather His Saints, to Destroy Sin and Sinners, and to Bring the Author of Sin and Death to an Utter End.

tal. He maintains that man can become so only by a new infusion of life. He is not so by nature; he becomes so by faith and transforming grace.

Paul had little success in Athens, the city of Socrates and Plato. He would doubtless have secured a hearing if he had

proclaimed the immortality of the soul and its corollaries. Moreover, he demonstrated here the futility of meeting reason with reason, logic with logic, and philosophy with philosophy. Thenceforth he was a preacher of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2), risen, ascended, mediating, judging, and coming again to raise the dead, translate the living, reward the righteous, and punish the wicked with everlasting destruction.

4. PUNISHMENT OF WICKED IS TOTAL DESTRUCTION.—Twenty times the apostle Paul declares that the wages of sin is death—absolute death, cessation of life. Twenty times he tells us that death is the punishment for sin—and also in a dozen places that life and immortality are special privileges, as in Romans 6:23 and 8:11. Twenty-five times Paul spells out the fate of the wicked, and constantly uses terms connoting total destruction such as:

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God . . . : who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* [*olethron aiōnion*, “eternal ruin, death”] from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints” (2 Thess. 1:8-10).

Paul speaks once of the resurrection of the wicked, or “unjust” (Acts 24:15). But their survival will be of such short duration that he usually passes it over in silence. In his Epistle to the Hebrews⁸ it is stated:

“We are not of them who draw back unto *perdition*; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” “For our God is a *consuming fire*” “which shall *devour* the adversaries” (Heb. 10:39; 12:29; 10:27).

That which God consumes He does not allow still to exist. After the execution of the judgment, death will have no more victories, but will itself be abolished (Rev. 20:14). Immortality, Paul asserts, cannot begin before “this *corruptible* shall have put on *incorruption*, and this *mortal* shall have put on *immortality*” (1 Cor. 15:54; cf. 1 Tim. 6:16), which change takes place when Christ comes the second time. Here is Paul’s key declaration in his earliest epistle:

⁸ The present writer accepts the arguments in favor of Pauline authorship as more weighty than those for all other candidates put together.

"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. 4:16, 17).

That is a bird's-eye view of the Pauline witness. Now let us examine Paul's testimony from the eschatological side.

III. Places All Messages in Graphic Eschatological Setting

Paul is careful even in his very first epistles to place his message in a graphic, well-defined eschatological setting. The Thessalonian epistles set forth the transcendent scenes of the Second Advent, with its glorification of the saints at the resurrection and subsequent destruction of all sinners. This is presented as the climax of the divine plan of the ages—the *end events* being the culmination of a sweeping outline that takes in the centuries and leads up to the devastating scenes of the day of the Lord. That is therefore the initial New Testament emphasis.

1. SECOND ADVENT INVOLVES RESURRECTION AND TRANSLATION.—Paul leads into the Second Advent that closes the age. He depicts the Lord Jesus descending from Heaven and calling forth from their graves the sleeping saints, and catching up and translating the saints then living, to meet Him and thenceforth be together forever with their Lord. Such is Paul's earliest depiction.

2. "DAY OF THE LORD" BRINGS "SUDDEN DESTRUCTION" TO SINNERS.—Paul then immediately refers to the "day of the Lord," as coming unexpectedly to many, like "a thief in the night." It brings "sudden destruction" (1 Thess. 5:2, 3) to the wicked. But he assures the spiritually alert that that day will not overtake them as a thief (v. 4).

3. ATTENDANT CIRCUMSTANCES OF ADVENT PORTRAYED.—In his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul picks up the



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Christ, Our Creator and Redeemer, Who Died as Our Atoning Sacrifice, and Now Ministers as Mediating Priest, Will Soon Return as Conquering King to Gather Home His Ransomed Ones.

portrayal at the same point, the Second Advent, adding details as to the *manner* of that coming, but this time he stresses the terror and destruction visited upon the *living wicked* when Christ appears, in contrast with the glorification and rejoicing of the saints:

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his *mighty angels*, in flaming fire taking *vengeance* on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* [*olethron aiōnion*, “eternal ruin, death”] from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe” (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

4. COMING APOSTASY PAUL’S GRAVE CONCERN.—In Second Thessalonians 2, Paul continues his subject of the “day of the Lord.” He warns against the illusion that this tremendous “day” is just at hand. First, he says, there will be a dread

“falling away” (*apostasia*, foretold by Christ in Matthew 24 and Daniel 7) and the appearing, historically, of the “man of sin,” or “son of perdition” (2 Thess. 2:3), the “Antichrist,” whose activities he describes in these words:

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the *temple* of God, shewing himself that he is God” (v. 4).

Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he had forewarned them orally of the great apostasy to come into the Christian church, which would be held back only by the iron might of a unified pagan Rome (vs. 5, 6). But that would pass and the apostasy would appear. He declares that the seeds of spiritual departure were already germinating in his own day:

“For the mystery of *iniquity* doth already work: only he who now *letteth* [*katechō*, “to restrain,” “to hold back”] will *let* [*restrain*], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall *consume* with the spirit of his mouth, and shall *destroy* with the *brightness of his coming*” (vs. 7, 8).

This power would be characterized by signs and wonders and deceit, becoming an overpowering “strong delusion” (vs. 9-11). Appealing to the church to hold to the “truth” they had been taught, he solemnly warns that those who believe and receive this “lie” will be “damned” (vs. 11, 12). That is Paul’s teaching on the “last things,” in the setting of the antecedent great apostasy that would be established before the Second Advent, and would cease only with the second coming of Christ at the end of the age.

5. DIFFERENTIATES BETWEEN RESURRECTION OF RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED.—The first Corinthian epistle likewise opens with a reference to “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:7). Then man’s usurping judgment will give way to God’s just and sovereign judgment.

Chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians is the great Second Advent and resurrection-translation classic. Paul first lays down this basic principle concerning the resurrection: “For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive” (v. 22).

The resurrection is universal. But the dead are raised in

two groups. Paul explains that "*they that are Christ's*" come forth at His second coming (v. 23). But not all are Christ's. John the revelator says that the *wicked* will not come forth until the *second* resurrection (Rev. 20:5, 6). That is the resurrection of the "unjust" (Acts 24:15), or the resurrection unto "damnation" (John 5:29), as Christ expressly denominated it.

Then, when the "end comes," all rule and authority and power is subjected to Christ (1 Cor. 15:24-28). And this includes the "last enemy" of mankind, which is "death" (v. 26). Thus the fearsome reign of death will cease at the Advent and resurrection. As to these bodies of ours:

"It [the body of the saint] is sown in corruption; it is raised in *incorruption* [*aphtharsia*, immortality]; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a *natural body* [*sōma psuchikon*]; it is raised a *spiritual body* [*sōma pneumatikon*]" (vs. 42-44).

Then we shall again bear the "image of the heavenly" (v. 49). And this is brought about through Christ, the "quickening spirit" (v. 45). And now comes the tremendous passage concerning those who sleep in Jesus, together with those who are then living, who will be translated:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall *not all sleep* [*koimaō*, here, the sleep of death], but we shall all 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*. For this *corruptible* [*phtharton*, "perishable"] must *put on* incorruption, and this *mortal* must put on *immortality*. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in *victory*" (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

The whole picture is there: (1) The "last trump," (2) the *resurrection* of the sleeping saints, (3) the *changing*, or translation, of the living saints, (4) and for both, the "corruptible" putting on "incorruption" and the "mortal" putting on "immortality." The transformation and the victory are all through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6. OUR VILE BODIES CHANGED AT ADVENT.—In Philippians Paul declares:

"Who [Christ] shall *change* our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21).

In 1 Timothy 1:16, 17 our believing in Christ *unto* "life everlasting" is coupled with the reminder that God alone is the "King eternal, *immortal*, invisible, the only wise God." Only the Godhead has absolute, original, underived immortality. Man's immortality is derived and contingent, and is not received until the Second Advent.

7. SEDUCING SPIRITS IMPINGE ON GOD'S UNAPPROACHABLE IMMORTALITY.—Then Paul turns to the characteristic developments of the "latter times," when "some shall depart from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*" (chap. 4:1). This is reminiscent of the seductive lie and liar in Eden that beguiled the mother of the human race. There will be a revival in the "latter times," characterized by the power and persuasiveness of that first fatal deception. But Paul admonishes us to "*lay hold* on eternal life," and to see that we are kept "without spot . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. 6:12, 14).

He goes out of his way to declare again that the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" is the one "who *only* hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (v. 16). And his parting admonition to Timothy is to "*lay hold on eternal life*" (v. 19). It was not his inherently.

8. IMMORTALITY BROUGHT INTO FOCUS THROUGH GOSPEL.—In 2 Timothy, Paul again mentions the second "appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath *brought life and immortality to light* through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

It is thus clear that immortality has not been the inalienable possession of the human family since the Fall. It is a provision brought to light through the gospel. And the apostle speaks of his own persuasion that Christ is "able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim.

1:12). And once more he adverts to the "last days" and tabulates a list of some nineteen telltale specifications that will characterize them (chap. 3:2-5). He avows that the Lord Jesus Christ will "judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (chap. 4:1). Again he forewarns that—

"the time will come [in the "latter days"] when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . ; they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (vs. 3, 4).

Then he stresses his own personal belief, and confession, that—

"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" (v. 8).

All rewards will be given together at the Second Advent. And in closing his letter to Titus, Paul twice refers to the "hope of eternal life" (Titus 1:2; 3:7), promised, he declares, "before the world began" (chap. 1:2). That is Paul's comprehensive testimony in its vital eschatological setting and framework. In this he faithfully follows the pattern of Christ. And this is designed to be the pattern for every teacher of truth concerning the nature and destiny of man.

IV. Pauline Portrayal and Usage of "Immortal" and "Immortality"

The term "immortality" is used but five times in Scripture, and "immortal" but once. All are in the New Testament, and all are Pauline.

1. ABSOLUTE IMMORTALITY IS ATTRIBUTE OF GOD ALONE.—Absolute immortality is an attribute belonging solely to God, along with His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. *These are exclusively His*. "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath *immortality* [*athanasian*, "incorruption"]" (1 Tim. 6: 15, 16; cf. 1 Cor. 15:53, 54). The inescapable inference there-

fore follows that man does *not* possess the attribute of immortality by nature. It is not a natural characteristic of man. It is ever to be *sought for* (Rom. 2:7), and is always and only to be *received as a gift* (Rom. 6:23). In various passages the adjective "mortal" (*thnētos*) is applied to man (see Rom. 6:12; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54; 2 Cor. 4:11; 5:4), while "immortal" is applied only to God. And with this agrees the solitary use of "immortal."

"Now unto the King eternal, *immortal* [*aphthartō*, "not liable to corruption"], invisible, the only wise God" (1 Tim. 1:17).

There is thus perfect agreement in the Pauline testimony and fundamental harmony with the testimony of Christ, the other apostles, and the prophets.

2. CHRIST THE REVEALER OF IMMORTALITY TO MAN.—The second basic truth essential for our understanding is Christ's relationship to it all. "By the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought *life and immortality* to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). The eternal Son of God, then, has brought within the knowledge and grasp of man that everlastingness of perfect being, which is now the possession of God alone. Man is to share this at God's appointed time.

3. IMMORTALITY NOT PRESENT POSSESSION OF HUMANITY.—Immortality is someday erelong to be received by those who seek for it in God's way and upon whom He will bestow it as a gift. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing *seek* for glory and honour and *immortality*, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7).

4. MAN, NOW MORTAL, TO PUT ON IMMORTALITY.—That day of bestowal is drawing near: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this *mortal* must *put on immortality*" (1 Cor. 15:53). Obviously one does not put on what he already has inherently. But when will this bestowal take place?

5. RESURRECTION IS TIME OF PUTTING ON IMMORTALITY.—





FRANKLIN BOOTH, ARTIST

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Christ's Second Advent in Time's Last Hour Will Bring Death and Destruction to the Wicked, Who Have Spurned His Overtures of Grace and Life.

The resurrection day is not far away, with its glorious, eternal victory, and its transformation for man.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this

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Eve Was Beguiled by the Dazzling Tempter Into Believing She Could Attain Innate Immortality Through Disobedience.

mortal shall have *put on immortality*, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

It cannot be overstated that God is the sole present possessor of immortality. He is the source from which man, at present mortal, must obtain immortality. Christ is the revealer and channel of eternal life and immortality. He has brought to light the possibility and provision of attaining immortal life—it is provided in Him as the channel through which it may flow to us. Man is to seek for it, and the seeker will be rewarded. Man will put on immortality at the resurrection of the just. But it will always be derived, contingent immortality—not independent immortality. That is ever and only God's.

And now let us look at the opposite side of the picture, through Paul's eyes.

6. THOSE NOT RECEIVING IMMORTALITY ARE DOOMED.—Paul consistently refers to immortality as a *goal*, an objective, which lies before the righteous, who live in quest of immortality. On the contrary, the "wrath" (*orgē*) of God inevitably awaits the unrighteous. And Paul faithfully depicts the awful doom of sin's retribution. Thus he contrasts the eternal life, which is the "gift of God" to man, with the final death, which is the "wages of sin" (Rom. 6:23).

"Who [God] will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing *seek* for glory and honour and *immortality, eternal life*: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and *wrath* [*orgē*], tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. 2:6-9).

The Greek word *aphtharsia*, here translated "immortality," is rendered "incorruption" in the Revised Version. *Aphtharsia* (literally "imperishability") and *aphthartos* (translated "incorruptible," "immortal") and their cognate opposites *phthora* and *phthartos* (translated "corruption," "dissolution," and "perishable") throw no small light on both the nature and the destiny of mortal man. All four words are related to the verb *phtheirō*, translated "to destroy" in 1 Corinthians

3:17: "If any man defile the temple [body] of God, him shall God *destroy* [*phtheirō*]." That is the other, the somber, the tragic, reverse side of the picture of Life Only in Christ.

7. IMMORTALITY PREDICATED ONLY OF GOD.—It is never to be forgotten that absolute, underived immortality is predicated only of God. With Paul this word "immortal" (*aphthartos*), meaning not liable to corruption, as elsewhere remarked, is never joined with the Greek words for "soul" or "spirit," although *pneuma* (spirit) occurs 385 times in the New Testament, and *psuchē* (soul) 105 times, a total of 490 times. Furthermore, in the Old Testament immortality is never once predicated of *rûach*, for spirit (occurring 400 times), or *nephesh*, for soul (used 752 times), a combined grand total of 1,642 times! It is predicated of one Being only—God. This is basic theology. It is the revealed message of God. (Cf. Rom. 1:23; 1 Cor. 9:25; 15:22; 1 Peter 1:23; 3:4. Also 2 Tim. 1:10.)

And *athanasia* ("immortality") is expressly declared to be possessed by God alone (1 Tim. 6:16). It is not "put on" by man until the resurrection, when *mortality* shall be "swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:53, 54). Such is the beautiful unity, the inexorable logic, and sublime consistency of the theology of Paul, the master theologian of the centuries.

"For this *corruptible* [*phtharton*] must put on *incorruption* [*aphtharsian*], and this *mortal* [*thnēton*] must put on *immortality* [*athanasian*]. So when this *corruptible* [*phtharton*] shall have put on *incorruption* [*aphtharsian*], and this *mortal* shall have put on *immortality* [*athanasian*], then shall be brought to pass the saying . . . , *Death* [*thanatos*] is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:53, 54).

Paul's Leading Problem Passage

(2 Cor. 5:1-9)

I. "Absent From the Body"; "Present With the Lord"

1. PERIL OF INVOKING THE ISOLATED VERSE.—It is both illogical and unsafe to build any major doctrine on isolated passages, apart from the general tenor of Scripture. It is to be remembered that enormous errors have been built upon isolated verses. Thus the tender solicitude, "Compel them to come in" (Luke 14:23), was made the pretext for the cruel horrors of the Inquisition. And the symbolic expression concerning the Lord's Supper, "This is my body," was made the basis of the dogma of transubstantiation by the Roman Church.

Luther, progressing part way, saw in it consubstantiation, and refused the hand of Zwingle, who held the bread to be but an emblem and could not admit of Luther's strained explanation. Yet on a paralleling page, as it were, Jesus committed His mother unto John, saying to her, "Behold thy son!" (John 19:26), in other words, he would be to her a son. And all understood the use. Paul wisely admonished Timothy as a young minister to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

2. CONTENTION: DEATH ONLY A "TRANSITION."—In the passage we are about to survey (2 Cor. 5:1-9), the expression "absent from the body, . . . present with the Lord" (v. 8) is one of the Pauline statements most commonly drafted upon to prove that death is only a change of life for the believer—simply a transition, with the soul of the saint passing out of the body and going straight into the Lord's presence. This is be-

cause the accepted view of the Immortal-Soulist is that the "dead" in Christ are not dead at all. Rather, they are alleged to be radiantly alive in Heaven in a state of conscious bliss, with instantaneous transference at death to the immediate presence of Christ. The poet has aptly summarized the contention as, "There is no death; what seems so is transition."

One of the tragic results of the popular view is that the language and intent of Scripture have been largely forsaken. But according to Scripture, only in the future, *after* the Second Advent, will the time come when "there shall be no more death" (Rev. 21:4). Some have gone so far as actually to substitute "ascended" and "translated" for the term "death," in certain sermons, obituaries, and epitaphs.

3. CONTENTION: SOUL NOW ENJOYING CELESTIAL LIFE OF BLISS.—This passage is not the easiest to understand. Peter refers to a few such difficult Pauline expressions "hard to be understood," which some wrest to their own ruin (2 Peter 3:16). So these verses are often taken as indicating that during the intermediate period, preceding the resurrection of the body, the soul is separated from the body and experiences a celestial life of disembodied bliss. Dr. A. T. Robertson, in commenting on the term "*naked*" (*gumnoi*), in 2 Corinthians 5:3, says, "That is, disembodied spirits, 'like the souls in Sheol, without form and void of all power of activity' (Plummer)." ¹ But there is not a word about the soul in the whole account.

Paul's words, however, must be understood in the light of his own uniform and repeated teaching on the nature of man, not on a concept never held either by Paul or by any of the other apostles, much less by any group in the Christian church for nearly two centuries thereafter. This mortal body does not enclose an immortal principle or entity, which is released by the stroke of death, and then flies away in glad release. That is simply thinly disguised Platonism.

This passage is considered so important to proponents of

¹ Archibald T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 4, p. 228.

Immortal-Soulism, and such reliance is placed upon its words and phrasings, that we shall examine it with special care to see whether the dependence is justified. So we will approach it from a number of angles, diagramming its major phrases, so as to show their related intent, and even presenting a definitive glossary of terms as an aid. We shall look at it historically, contextually, linguistically, and exegetically. The question of semantics is definitely involved; hence a precise definition of terms and a study of usages are called for. Truth, it should be added, will always welcome searching scrutiny.

4. UNKNOWN IN CHRISTIAN CHURCH UNTIL NEARLY A.D. 200.—Be it particularly noted that when Paul wrote his various epistles, the Platonic philosophy of a persisting immortal soul, such as had already devastated the Jewish church, had not yet penetrated the infant Christian church. Such an innovation *did not intrude until nearly A.D. 200*. None of the apostles so held. Therefore Paul did not, in A.D. 58, teach such a theory nor would any of his early Christian readers so construe his words.

That, we earnestly aver, was a deviation that developed in the third and fourth centuries, in time becoming the identifying dogma of the great Roman Church of the medieval centuries, and regrettably retained by many of the Protestant Reformation churches that revolted from the Catholic communion but nevertheless retained various of the Roman departures. (See Part IV for full documentation.)

II. Setting and Intent of Paul's Unusual Portrayal

First, let us get the setting. When the apostle Paul first went to Corinth he sought out and lived with Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers. Then "because he [Paul] was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers" (Acts 18:3).

It was but natural, then, that Paul, in this Epistle to the Corinthians, should introduce a figure of speech in which he

likens his body to a "tabernacle-tent"—later changing the figure to "clothing." He compares the human body to a transitory tent, or tabernacle, and stresses the fact that he does not want to be houseless, but wishes to exchange his present, transient tent-house for a new and glorious "eternal house," a "building of God"—the new and glorified body that he would receive at the coming of the Lord.

Or, changing the figure, he does not wish to be divested of his "clothing," and be "naked" (used as a figure for death),² but rather, to be "clothed upon" (by resurrection or translation) by his "house which is from heaven." This is in complete conformity with his message to the Philippians, where he speaks of "heaven":

"Whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:20, 21, R.V.).

I. TWO LIVES FOR BELIEVERS—PRESENT AND FUTURE.—Paul knew of no other *life* for the believer than (1) "the life that *now is*" and (2) "that which is *to come*" (1 Tim. 4:8)—just the two. The first is, of course, our present temporary mortal life, now possessed; the other is the future immortal life, of which we are heirs and for which we hope (Matt. 19:29; Titus 1:2). The present life is spent in a "natural" body; the future eternal life will be lived in a "spiritual" body (1 Cor. 15:44). Neither Paul nor any other New Testament writer knew, or wrote, of any *disembodied soul* life. Such a concept was then held only by one wing of the Jews, and had been introduced from Platonism in the last two centuries before Christ by certain Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writers. (See Part III, chaps. 36-38, pp. 632-680.)

Paul declared that we could not enter the Lord's presence in the natural body of our humiliation. On the road to Damascus he had had an overpowering glimpse of Christ's glory, and the sight had blinded him and struck him down to earth (Acts 9:1-9). John, too, who had reclined on the bosom

² See Job 1:21 ("naked shall I return thither"); cf. Eccl. 5:15.



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The Death of Christ Vindicated the Law and Government of God and Provided Life and Immortality for Man. The Cross Is God's Great Remedy for Sin.

of Jesus when His glory was veiled during His incarnation, fell down at His feet as one dead when that same Jesus unveiled His glory to him in vision on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:17). But John had confidence that he would yet look upon his glorified Lord without fear. And the reason was that "when he shall appear [at the Second Advent], *we shall be like him*" (1 John 3:2).

That would not be in the clothing of this present mortal flesh, but in a new and glorified body, for, as there is a "natural body," there is also to be a "spiritual body" to follow (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

There must therefore be a change. And that change will take place on the glorious resurrection-translation day when this mortal puts on immortality (v. 53). Not death, then, but *victory over death*, was the apostle Paul's fond hope (v. 54). He knew that if the Lord delayed His return, mortality would be swallowed up in *death* for him. He longed not to be "unclothed" by *death*, but to be "clothed upon" by *translation* at the Advent, that "mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4).

If the Lord's return should find Paul "unclothed," or "naked," in the state of death, then his hope was in the *resurrection*, when death would be swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:54). But his ardent longing was for the other *swallowing up*—the swallowing up of this mortal life by a glorious immortality through *translation*, without dying at all (2 Cor. 5:4). He longed to join the elect company of Enoch and Elijah.

2. EARTHEN VESSELS MUST BE REPLACED.—2 Corinthians 5 should not be separated from chapter 4. In the latter Paul had just spoken of his mortal body, and the sufferings it had endured. This is his portrayal:

"But we have this treasure *in earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body [mortal flesh]" (2 Cor. 4:7-10).

His was a battered body—having suffered stonings, scourgings, and other terrible experiences detailed in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28. All those had left their marks on the fragile "earthen vessel." And there was also his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7)—a bodily infirmity, the exact nature of which

is not revealed—to buffet him, and keep him humble. But he testified: “I reckon that the sufferings of *this present time* are not worthy to be compared with *the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (Rom. 8:18).

However, the earthen vessel could not bear the fullness of that glory any more than new wine could be contained in old bottles (Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37, 38). So Paul longed to exchange the old body for the new one in which he would be forever free from “weariness and painfulness,” “hunger and thirst,” “cold and nakedness” (2 Cor. 11:27). Such was the constraining power that made even his life in this mortal flesh triumphant.

But while he was “at home” in this mortal body he was “absent” from his Lord, and confined to this present evil world. He longed to get rid of the old, and to receive the new and glorified body, and *dwell in Christ’s presence* forever.

Now let us examine the full text, with technical definitions interspersed to illuminate the key words and phrases.

III. Full Text of Problem Passage With Definitions

Here is the entire text of 2 Corinthians 5:1-9, with key words defined to bring out the fuller meaning:

“For we know that if our *earthly* [*epigeios*] house of this *tabernacle* [*skēnous*, “tent”] were *dissolved* [*kataluō*, “to tear down,” as of a tent, “to demolish”], we have a *building* of God, an *house not made with hands*, eternal in the heavens. For in this [earthly house] we groan, earnestly desiring to be *clothed upon* with our house which is from heaven: if so be that *being clothed* we shall not be found *naked*.

“For we that are in this tabernacle do *groan*, being burdened: not for that we would be *unclothed*, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the *earnest* [*arrabōna*, “a down payment,” “pledge”] of the Spirit.

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are *at home* in the body, we are *absent* from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and *willing rather* to be absent from the body, and to be *present* with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”

IV. Five Basic Considerations Involved

1. THREE CONSECUTIVE STATES IMPRESSIVELY PORTRAYED.

—Paul here impressively describes three different consecutive states, or conditions, of man: (1) The *present earthly life*; (2) *the period of death*, or intermediate state; and (3) *the eternal future state*, when he shall have put on Immortality. (See the illustrative diagram on the three states, on page 341.) These states he sets forth under the figure of a temporary "tent," in contrast with an "abiding house"—which he later changed to the simile of "clothing," or covering. This transitory *present* life was wasting away under the incessant sufferings he had endured. It is a life in which he groans and is burdened. This body, however, was soon to be "dissolved," like a worn-out tent that is laid aside.

But Paul's mind leaps forward from the present, transitory existence to the eternal heavenly status of things to come. He sees a glorious change—the blessed hope of exchanging his frail earthly "tent" for a new and eternal "house," a "mansion which is of heaven"—by which he refers to his glorious resurrection body to come, in likeness to that of his Lord's. And he is satisfied.

2. SHRINKS FROM BEING UNCLOTHED IN DEATH.—When he thinks of the time when his present "tent" must be taken down, or dissolved, he shrinks from the thought of being without tent, or *covering*—for here he changes the figure to that of "clothing." What was before a "tent" is now "being clothed." And he distinctly states that he does not desire to be "unclothed," or "naked." He would much rather be "overdraped" with the coming immortality than to be denuded of the mortal body. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4).

The "unclothed" state is manifestly that of death (1 Cor. 15:37)—the "*bare* [*gumnon*, "naked"] grain," planted in the ground, in gravedom, with a view to resurrection. And



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Christ Will Call, and We
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the "clothed upon" condition is obviously the resurrection or translation life, in which we shall have "put on" Immortality.

3. LONGS FOR ETERNAL STATE.—In writing to the Corinthians, Paul does not linger over the "death," or "unclothed," state. He passes on without pause to the blessed condition of being "clothed upon." That is the important thing, the glorious prospect, when at the sound of the trumpet we will awake to "put on" incorruption and Immortality. That is the whole point and purpose and consummation of the gospel. And the pledge thereof is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. INTERMEDIATE STATE THE BASIC QUESTION.—In verse 1 of 2 Corinthians 5, Paul had depicted death as the dissolving of our "earthly house." He is speaking not merely of the body but of our entire being. Death is the *dissolution of our entire being*. It is also to be emphasized that Paul is not speaking of

the consequences of death to a special part of our being, but of the *state of death* in contrast with the *future state of eternal life*, for which he earnestly longs. And this future life is in contrast with the condition called, from its transitoriness, a "tabernacle," in contrast with the "house not made with hands, *eternal* in the heavens" (v. 1).

5. DEATH NOT A POINT OF TIME, BUT A PERIOD.—The clue to this entire passage clearly lies in what is meant by, and involved in, that interim *state of death* which the apostle calls the dissolution of "our earthly house." Popular theology presupposes "death" to be a *momentary act*—the departure of the soul from the body, with instant entrance into the presence of Jesus. Such a view assumes the act of dying to be both the beginning and the end of death. But in inspired Scripture the act of dying is only the entrance into *the state of death*, which lasts from the moment one closes his eyes in the death-sleep to the moment he awakens in the resurrection. It is therefore not a *point* of time but a *period*—the entire period during which the person is enfolded in the embrace of *grave-dorm*. This is Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55.

The reign of death remains unbroken during this entire period of death. It is undeniably the *period* during which "our earthly house of this tabernacle" is dissolved. This cannot be overemphasized. We repeat: So far from contemplating merely the *moment a person dies*, Paul is speaking of *the entire time one is dead*. The act of dying, therefore, so far from being the termination of death, is only the *entrance under the dominion of death*. This, then, is established: At death our "earthly house of this tabernacle" is "dissolved," and continues in its state of dissolution until the Lord wakes us up from the death-sleep for the restoration of life and the bestowal of Immortality at His second advent.

6. INTERIM DEATH STATE VS. ETERNAL RESURRECTION STATE.—With this point established we are freed from a number of perplexities in this passage. Paul is not here contrasting

any state of the *soul* with that of the *body*. He is not contrasting the act of dying with that of the person in some other state or condition. The whole intermediate state is embraced in the idea of the "dissolution" of the "earthly house." No, Paul is here contrasting the temporary *interim death state* with the *eternal resurrection state*.

He is contrasting the present life, verging toward dissolution—and after a few years of dissolution and remaining in this state of dissolution until the resurrection—with the glorious, endless life which will begin when Christ raises His people, and which life will continue without end forever. This is the "building of God, an house not made with hands, *eternal in the heavens*" (2 Cor. 5:1).

On no theory could the intermediate death state be said to be "eternal in the heavens." The soul of the believer does *not* go to Heaven at death—an idea that was regarded as a heresy by the primitive church, as attested by Justin Martyr and Irenaeus.³

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF TERM "NOT MADE WITH HANDS."—The expression, "not made with hands" (*acheiropoiētos*), is not a cursory or merely routine phrase. It is fraught with meaning, and is historic in intent. This is by no means Paul's first use of the term. He had already used it three or four years prior in his oration on Mars' Hill, at Athens, in which he declared: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples *made with hands*" (Acts 17:24).

And again in his Epistle to the Hebrews (*c.* A.D. 53) Paul is even more explicit:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places *made with hands*, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

However, the expression is more than Pauline. In his great apology, in answering the accusation of blasphemy, Stephen

³ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 80; Irenaeus, *Heresies*, chap. 31. Not until about A.D. 180 did the concept of an innately immortal soul make entrance, under such a term, through Athenagoras. (See Part IV for full portrayal with documentation.)

likewise used the expression in "the most High dwelleth *not in temples made with hands*" (Acts 7:48). It clearly has to do with God and heavenly things. Yet even that is not the origin. It stems back to Christ Himself.

At the very outset of His public ministry, when Christ had purged the Temple from its desecraters, and had driven out the money-changers and merchandisers in the only recorded show of force in His life on earth, the Jews immediately challenged His authority for such an unprecedented act, and demanded a "sign" of His right and power to meddle in Temple affairs. Then He answered cryptically, and said, "Destroy this temple, and *in three days I will raise it up*" (John 2:19). But they countered by asserting that the Herodian temple was forty-six years in building, and asked scornfully: "Wilt thou rear it up in three days? *But he spake of the temple of his body*" (vs. 20, 21).

That was the real meaning. His resurrection would be the ultimate proof of His claims and the "sign" of His deity. But the significance of this utterance was, at the time, lost upon all—including the disciples. However, after Christ's resurrection from the dead, the disciples remembered it vividly—and then understood its meaning (v. 22). And after the Temple episode the Jews again demanded a "sign" from Christ (Matt. 12:38). But He upbraided them, and said:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the *sign of the prophet Jonas*: for as Jonas was *three days and three nights in the whale's belly*; so shall the Son of man be *three days⁴ and three nights in the heart of the earth*" (Matt. 12:39, 40).

His meaning then began to unfold to those who would understand.

8. EXEMPLIFIED IN CHRIST'S NATURAL AND RESURRECTION BODY.—This differentiation between "made *with hands*" and "made *without hands*" is further emphasized in the experience

⁴ Reference to the "third day" appears in Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mark 9:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46.

of Christ at His trial in the palace of the high priest. Then it was that the Pharisees' witnesses said:

"We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is *made with hands*, and within three days I will build another *made without hands* [*acheiropoiētos*]" (Mark 14:58).

That is highly significant. They spoke more wisely than they knew. Finally, at Calvary, when Christ hung in anguish on the cross—

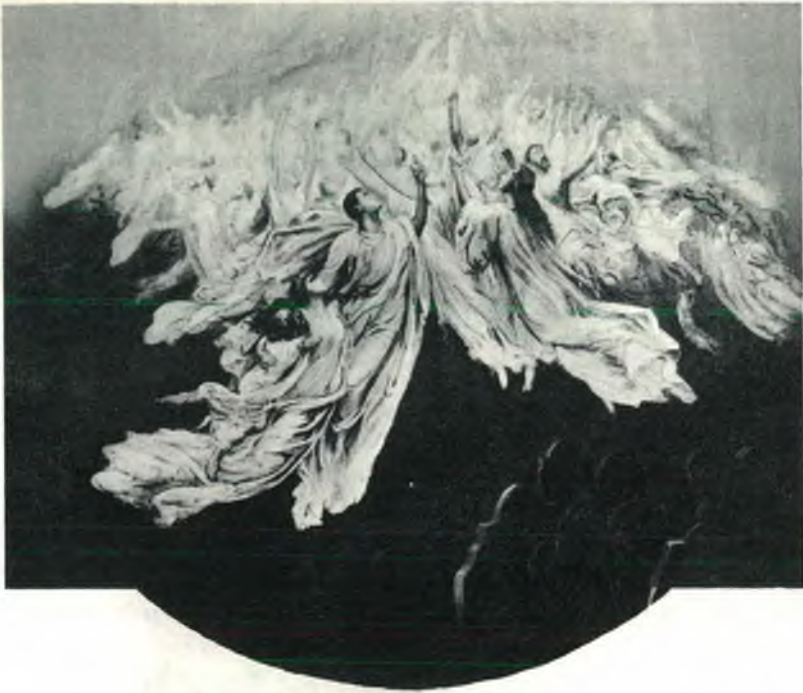
"they that passed by railed on him ["reviled"—Matt. 27:39], wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross" (Mark 15:29, 30; see Matt. 27:40).

But He was fulfilling a predetermined plan. He died that we, too, might have resurrection bodies "not made with hands." He would, and did, appear in His glorified resurrection body on the third day, according to prediction. Christ's body was placed in the tomb as a "natural body." It came forth on the specified third day as a "spiritual body." And in similar fashion we, too, shall "bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49), the image of the "second man," the "Lord from heaven" (v. 47; cf. Rom. 8:29). Our earthly bodies will then be "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21)—"*made without hands.*" Or as John says, "We know that, when he shall appear, *we shall be like him*" (1 John 3:2).

That is what Paul meant. Or, as he phrased it to the Colossians: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, *then shall ye also appear with him in glory*" (Col. 3:4).

That is the glorified body we are destined to receive, "*made without hands,*" formed by the creative power of God, in contrast with these earthly, corruptible, inglorious bodies, "*made with hands,*" through human generation.

9. EARTHLY TABERNACLE TEMPORARY; HEAVENLY TEMPLE ETERNAL.—In discussing what happens to the body, Paul illustrates it by this figure of the temporary wilderness tabernacle-tent of old, when God commanded Moses to build for Israel a "tent for the congregation," made after the pattern



The Grand Reunion, When All the Sleeping Saints of All Ages and Climes Are Caught Up Together to Meet Their Lord as He Calls Them Forth on the Resurrection Morn.

of the original temple, eternal in the heavens, shown to Moses in the mount (Ex. 25:40). This was so important that it is thrice referred to in the New Testament.

That was because there was a vital relation between the transient tabernacle in the wilderness and the resplendent temple of God in Heaven—the earthly being but a fragile, limited likeness of the heavenly. Paul applies the parallelism to the body, likening this present mortal body to the tabernacle on earth, that is to give place to the glorified, eternal body “not made with hands.” This earthly tabernacle of clay is to come to nought, be “dissolved” (2 Cor. 5:1). But it is to be replaced by a glorious and immortalized body, in God’s due time and provision.

For the vast majority of the saints there will be a lapse of time between the moment of death and the time when Christ,

having returned with His retinue of holy angels, shall make our mortal bodies like unto His own glorious body, by His own omnipotent, creative power. The actual lapse of time is not equally long for all—the longest being for the patriarchs before the Flood, the shortest for those dying just before the Second Advent.

But when the believer lies down in death, Paradise is just one act away—at the resurrection at the Advent. Between death and the resurrection would seem a briefer time than for an angel to wing his way from earth to Heaven. And the change will seem to take but a moment—a twinkling of an eye.

And some will not die. Their mortal bodies will be “changed” without experiencing death, through translation into glorified body form (1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4). This tremendous, final, supernatural act is what Paul calls being “clothed upon,” after having been “unclothed” in the death state. This is the main point of the passage.

10. SIMULTANEOUS REUNION AND REWARD AT CHRIST'S RETURN.—The whole passage treats on, and is written in, the spirit of the resurrection, with which it actually begins: “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus” (2 Cor. 4:14).

The comfort Paul offered the bereaved Christians at Thessalonica was not that their loved ones who had died in Christ would be immediately with Him in conscious joy. He does not offer happiness in a disembodied state. Rather, they would be caught up *together with them* to meet our Lord *upon His return*. That would be the moment of glad reunion (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Paul's eye was always upon Christ's future coming, as the day of (1) *reward* and (2) *reunion*. Thus he writes: “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).

It will be conceded that if man had never sinned he would have reached the eternal state or condition without passing through the experience of death. Then the notion of an inner,

immortal soul would never have come into being. That was the aftermath of the temptation and the Fall. It was, in fact, the *second* falsehood invented by the archdeceiver to sustain the first lie—"Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). When man should fall in death, the original lie would be inconcealably apparent, unless he could be persuaded that there is some invisible medium or entity (soul or spirit) through which he continues to live. Hence, such a theory was imperative, and was introduced into and through paganism, and became widely believed.

V. Glossary of Key Words and Phrases by Verses

As an aid to clear understanding, here are the English equivalents of the key words and phrases of 2 Corinthians 5:1-9.

Verse	Term	Amplified Meaning
(1)	<i>"Earthly house"</i>	—this earthly body, in our present temporal condition <i>"Tabernacle"</i> —temporary dwelling, earthly body <i>"Dissolved"</i> —disintegrate, go back to earthly elements <i>"Building of God"</i> —durable edifice, house from Heaven <i>"House . . . in the heavens"</i> —glorified body provided by the Lord <i>"Not made with hands"</i> —of heavenly origin
(2)	<i>"Groan"</i>	—sigh in distress, earnestly desiring redemption of body <i>"Clothed upon"</i> —to put on the "house" from Heaven <i>"House . . . from heaven"</i> —glorified resurrection body
(3)	<i>"Clothed"</i>	—mortal life in the flesh, here and now <i>"Naked"</i> —unclad, in state of death, dissolution
(4)	<i>"Unclothed"</i>	—stripped, without either mortal or immortal body <i>"Mortality"</i> —corruptible, subject to decay and death <i>"Swallowed up of life"</i> —invested with immortality
(5)	<i>"Earnest"</i>	—assurance of their full inheritance in the hereafter, token, sure pledge
(6)	<i>"At home in the body"</i>	—living in this present life, absent from Lord <i>"Absent from the Lord"</i> —not yet in His presence, not yet clothed upon
(8)	<i>"Absent from the body"</i>	—resting, asleep in Jesus, relieved of suffering <i>"Present with the Lord"</i> —having arrived, because "raised" or "changed," united with Christ

VI. Expository Survey of Passage by Verses

1. VERSE 1—EARTHLY HOUSE DISSOLVED; HEAVENLY HOUSE ETERNAL.—Let us now traverse the passage verse by verse, in logical sequence, in the light of all factors, as diagrammed or visualized by a chart. Paul speaks of our earthly "tent-house." And *tent* and *body* are similar in several respects—the materials of both are made of earthly elements, they are transient dwelling places, and may be taken down and moved at any time.

It will also be recalled that Christ tented, or tabernacled, for some thirty-three years among us (John 1:14), when He assumed a human body at His incarnation, before returning to Heaven. Peter similarly compares the human body to a tent, or tabernacle, that is put off at death (2 Peter 1:13, 14). The figure is therefore apt.

Again, our present *life state* is followed by the *death state*, or state of *dissolution*. And this in turn is to be succeeded, through resurrection or translation, by the *eternal life state*. Our glorified life begins when, and only when, Christ returns. Then we receive our "house *not made with hands*, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).

Paul casts his mind's eye across the gloomy stretch of death and dissolution and fixes it yearningly upon the eternal state, which begins when, and only when, the intermediate state ends. His faith overleaps the chasm of gravedom, anticipating the "unseen" but "eternal" state of blessedness for which he hoped (2 Cor. 4:18).

"*Clothed*," "*unclothed*," and "*clothed upon*" are thus the key words. While living on earth we are "clothed" with our mortal body. At death we are "unclothed" while in gravedom, this earthly body being laid aside and "dissolved." That will be the lot of the vast majority of believers. Only those living when Christ returns will escape dissolution, for they will be translated. But we shall all become "clothed upon" when we exchange the mortal for the glorious immortal bodies.

This Life

The Life to Come

<p>2 Cor. 5:2, 4 In this (body) tab- ernacle we <i>groan</i></p> <p>Rom. 8:22, 23 The whole creation <i>groaneth</i></p>	<p>Desiring to be clothed upon with our house from Heaven That mortality be swallowed up of life</p> <p>Waiting for the <i>redemption of our body</i></p>
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Paul's Three Consecutive States, or Conditions, of Man, Outlined

Two Houses—Temporary Earthly and Eternal Heavenly; With Intervening Death Between (2 Corinthians 5:1-9)

(1) "Clothed"	(2) "Unclothed"	(3) "Clothed Upon"
(<i>Present State</i> —Mortality)	(<i>Death State</i>)	(<i>Future State</i> —Immortal- ity)
TRANSITORY (temporal)	INTERMEDIATE (gravedom)	ETERNAL (from Heaven)
Brief earthly tabernacle- tent (made with hands)	Tabernacle-tent <i>dissolved</i>	Eternal house from Heaven <i>Not made with hands</i>

Clothed	Unclothed (naked)	Clothed Upon
Groaning under burdens	(Released from suffering)	(Glorified spiritual body)
Mortality	(Interim cessation of life)	Swallowed up of eternal life
Walking by faith	(Sleeping in Jesus)	Living by sight in God's presence
Having earnest of Spirit	(No perception of time)	Resurrected by power of Spirit
At home in body	Absent from the Lord	At home with the Lord
ABSENT FROM THE LORD	(<i>Resting in the Lord</i>)	PRESENT WITH THE LORD
		SECOND <i>Resurrection</i> ADVENT or translation

2. VERSE 2—GROANING FOR IMMORTALITY BEYOND RESURRECTION.—Verse 2 presents Paul's great desire as he contemplates the glorious eternal state. He longs, not for death (to free him from the hatreds of men and the infirmities of the flesh), but for the resurrection state. He passes over, as it were, the entire intermediate state. There is nothing to cause him to pause there with desire. His longing gaze is fixed upon the state that *begins* when the intermediate state has vanished like a dream.

We "groan," or sigh in distress, because we earnestly desire our Lord's return, and for the "change" of our bodies of humiliation into the likeness of His glorious body. Observe, in passing, Paul's parallelism in 2 Corinthians 5:2 and 4, and Romans 8:22, 23.

Yes, the "house . . . from heaven" (2 Cor. 5:2), the immortal body, the state of immortality, awaits the redeemed *beyond* the resurrection, or translation, day.

3. VERSE 3—CLOTHED AGAIN AFTER NAKED STATE OF DEATH.—There is often confusion over the term "naked," in verse 3. But the nakedness Paul mentions is the dissolution state of the earthly house of verse 1, and in verse 4 it is denominated "unclothed." Paul longs for the heavenly home, for when thus "*clothed upon*" we shall be no longer in the "naked" state to which death leads all men. And it is only of the *intermediate state* that Paul says this—not of *this* life, and surely not of the glorified *future* life.

In the glorified state we shall assuredly have our "eternal house" and home. The grave (*hadēs*—bereft of light and joy and consciousness) is not our home. It is indeed a state of uninviting nakedness. But Paul looks beyond this nakedness of death to the land of life. He thus rules out any possibility of a state between death and the resurrection in which, as disembodied spirits, men go to be present with the Lord. That cannot be the intent of "naked," or "unclothed."

The nature of the intervening *state of death* is that of *sleep*, without consciousness, and with no perception of time.

A thousand years will seem no longer than an instant. The dead in Christ are "fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:18). If that sleep were unbroken by the call of the Life-giver, it would be tantamount to utter extinction—an eternal sleep. But all who sleep are destined to an inevitable awakening, either unto "life" or to "damnation." So beyond the state of death looms the glorious state of immortality—with eternal life, joy, and light.

4. VERSE 4—MORTALITY TO BE SWALLOWED UP BY IMMORTALITY.—In verse 4 (2 Cor. 5), Paul repeats the point that in "this tabernacle" we "groan, being burdened." The world, Satan, sin, and temptation had made his life a burden. Yet all this cannot produce a desire to be "unclothed"—in the unclothed *intermediate* state that he disparages. Death is not the time of redemption, nor is the grave our home. It is only a temporary tarrying place until our Lord returns. Paul's burden is for the future "clothed upon" state of the heavenly house, eternal in duration. The grave signifies the triumph of death. But death, or mortality, is to be "swallowed up of life," a life that shall never end. And death itself is to be obliterated (Rev. 20:14).

This mortal must *put on*, or be *invested with*, immortality. This corruptible must become incorruptible by immortalizing transformation. Only then can it inherit the kingdom of God, with its endless life. Until and unless there is this tremendous creative "change," there can be no immortal life for any of the human family. But when that is accomplished, then "mortality" is swallowed up of immortality, and we will be "clothed upon" with our eternal house from Heaven. As noted, this is not at *death* but at the last trump, when the Lord Jesus appears in glory, and the dead are "raised," and the righteous living are "changed" in the twinkling of an eye. That is the great apostle's unequivocal declaration.

And Paul categorically states that men are not clothed with immortality *individually and separately at death, but simultaneously and "together," at the resurrection-translation*



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The Host of the Redeemed—a Multitude No Man Can Number—Stand Before God Clothed in Fadeless Immortality, Sealed for Eternity.

of the just (1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:15-17). And it is to be observed, further, that in *translation* the mortal body of the liv-

ing is "changed" without a prior "dissolution." This is definitely included in the phrases, "clothed upon," and "mortality swallowed up of life"—Paul's ardent hope. Paul's mind is fully made up. He does not want to be "unclothed," to die, to disintegrate. He would rather live on, and continue in the "clothed" state, with all its burdens and sufferings, than to die. But when the third possibility is considered, it at once takes first place in his heart.

Paul wishes above all things to be "clothed upon" with his promised "house . . . from heaven"—when the Lord would come and fashion anew the body of his humiliation. At the Second Advent, when Christ shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory, being "clothed upon" with our heavenly house.

5. INDWELLING SPIRIT IS PLEDGE OF OUR RESURRECTION.—The Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts is the "earnest" (down payment, assurance, pledge, token) that we shall finally receive the desire of our heart, and be "clothed upon" with immortality. The indwelling of the Spirit is the sure pledge that the Spirit that raised up Jesus will also raise us up (Rom. 8:11). Compare this trio of texts:

PRESENT PLEDGE OF HOLY SPIRIT	FUTURE REDEMPTION OF BODY
2 Cor. 5:5—"Hath given unto us the <i>earnest</i> of the Spirit"	That mortality might be swallowed up of <i>life</i>
Eph. 1:13, 14—"Sealed with that <i>holy Spirit</i> "—"the <i>earnest</i> of our inheritance"	Until the <i>redemption</i> of the purchased possession
Rom. 8:11—"The <i>Spirit</i> of him that raised up Jesus"—dwelling in you	He that raised up Jesus shall also <i>quicken</i> your mortal bodies All taking place at the Second Advent and the resurrection-translation (1 Cor. 15:51-55).

6. VERSE 6—AT HOME IN BODY; ABSENT FROM THE LORD.—To be in our “earthly” tabernacle-house is to be “at home in the body.” The chief characteristic of this temporary house is that it is mortal and may be dissolved. That is our present situation. To be “absent from the Lord” is to be living here on earth, or resting in the grave—not yet in His presence. To be “present” with Him is effected by being either “raised” or “changed”—these being the sole gateways to the glory land.

7. VERSE 8—INTERVAL OF DEATH SEPARATES FROM PRESENCE WITH LORD.—There is nothing in verse 8 or in the context to justify the contention that being “present with the Lord” occurs immediately upon being “absent from the body.” The passage does not indicate *when* these experiences take place. We do not, immediately upon dying, take possession. From Paul’s other writings, and Scripture in general, it is established that the interval of the *death state* is the period that separates the two. We await the coming of the Lord.

Paul does not here deny his previous witness to the Corinthians—that this “corruptible must *put on* incorruption, and this mortal must *put on* immortality” (1 Cor. 15:53)—and that at the Second Advent, which is still future. Paul is uniformly consistent and very positive that “if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. . . . Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (1 Cor. 15:16, 18). His only hope, like the worthies of Hebrews 11, is in the resurrection of the dead. Thus he declares that there is no advantage in the martyrs fighting the beasts at Ephesus, “if the dead rise not” (1 Cor. 15:32). Obviously, they were not already in Heaven.

“Absent from the body” (2 Cor. 5:8) consequently denotes, not happiness in a disembodied state, but a period of relief from a suffering and dying body—of resting and sleeping in Jesus.

“The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). Thus the present world is contrasted with the future. The present earth and

its inhabitants are to continue but for a limited time; the world to come, with the redeemed children of God, is eternal. The portrayal is that of a tent *versus* a permanent home at the end of life's journey.

8. RECAPITULATION: THREE STATES FOR MAN.—So this problem passage, written under inspiration, presents three states, or conditions, each in sharp contrast with the other two. These are: (1) This present mortal life; (2) the intermediate state of death; and (3) the future immortal life of the redeemed.

The *first* is spoken of as "we that are in this [bodily] tabernacle do groan" (v. 4). The *second* is described by, "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved," we are "naked," "unclothed" (vs. 1, 4). The *third* is alternately described as "a building of God" "eternal in the heavens," "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," "mortality . . . swallowed up of life," and "present with the Lord" (vs. 1, 2, 4, 8).

The second of these conditions—the state of death—is not one to be desired. But the third is so glorious that Paul groans for it. It is therefore clear that being "present with the Lord" cannot possibly mean his condition while this earthly house is "dissolved" in death. This second state Paul disparages, but the third he praises. These are definitely not descriptions of one and the same period and condition. Paul expected to be present with the Lord *after* the intermediate state and the resurrection—or through translation, without passing through death. Thus there is harmony and consistency in this impressive passage of the great theologian-apostle. The conditionalist position reconciles all factors.

Paul's Other Problem Passages

I. (2 Cor. 12:2-4): Paul's Vision—"In . . . or Out of the Body"

In 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, Paul speaks of being caught up into the third heaven, where he heard unspeakable words. It is frequently alleged that this passage or episode furnishes an example of a human soul, or spirit, actually existing or traveling in a conscious, perceptive condition outside of the body, seeing transcendent sights and hearing unspeakable words, thus gathering heavenly information, and then returning to resume its abode in the temporarily deserted body. But Paul plainly declares that this was a "vision," or "revelation" (v. 1). *Surely the vision of a prophet does not prove consciousness in death.*

1. EXACT SPECIFICATIONS OF PASSAGE.—Here is the passage in full:

"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to *visions* and *revelations* of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago,¹ (whether *in the body*, I cannot tell; or whether *out of the body*, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one *caught up* to the *third heaven*. And I knew such a man, (whether *in the body*, or *out of the body*, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into *paradise*, and heard *unspeakable words*, which it is not lawful [ouk exon, "possible," or "proper"] for a man to utter."

It will be observed that there is not a word in the passage about the soul of Paul leaving the body to visit Paradise. Paul

¹Fourteen years prior was about the time Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch (Acts 11:25, 26), possibly from Tarsus.

was still very much alive. So the text proves nothing pro or con as to the soul's separate existence after death, *for he had not died*. Paul says he knew a "man" in Christ, not a spirit, how "he" was "caught up." But Paul himself was obviously the "man" that he knew. It was a personal experience in his own life. However, it was a *man*, not the soul of a man.

Paradise is here equated with the third heaven, where the tree of life is (Rev. 2:7; 22:2). So Paul was carried away, *in vision*, to Paradise, just as John was later, while imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos. Paul plainly denominates it a "vision."

2. VISIONS PRODUCED BY AGENCY OF HOLY SPIRIT.—Visions are produced through the agency of the Holy Spirit, while men are living. Thus of Ezekiel the Scripture record is:

"And the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me *in the visions of God* to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north" (Eze. 8:3).

"Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me *in a vision by the Spirit of God* into Chaldea, to them of the captivity" (chap. 11:24).

The question unavoidably arises, Could not the Spirit have similarly conveyed Paul, as well as Ezekiel? Then there was John, just mentioned, on the Isle of Patmos, who wrote: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast" (Rev. 17:3).

These experiences took place while these men were *alive* in the earthly service of God, and were seen through the ecstasy of vision, with the mind under the supernatural control of the Holy Spirit. They therefore prove nothing about the condition of the dead, and have *nothing to do with death*. There is therefore not a scintilla of proof from this passage for consciousness of the soul between death and the resurrection. It is to be remembered that Paul frequently recorded personal communications from God through visions (Acts 9:4-6; 16:9; 18:9; 22:17, 18; 23:11; 27:23, 24; Gal. 2:2). This was no exception.

As to the expression, "in the body," or "out," there was complete absence of sensibility to earthly surroundings. The



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In the Divine Pageant of History the March of Nations Is Nearing the End of the Age, When the Last Things Will Occur, Toward Which All Humanity Moves.

third, or highest, Heaven, or Paradise (2 Cor. 12:4), where God is, has frequently been seen in vision by various prophets. And, as generally recognized, the first heaven is the atmosphere; the second that of the starry heavens; the third the abode of God and heavenly beings. But let us look more closely into the matter of the visions of the prophets.

3. "VISIONS" INSEPARABLE PART OF PROPHETIC ROLE.—Through Moses, the Lord said of the prophet, "I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a *vision*" (Num. 12:6). And Job said that "in a dream, in a *vision* of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, . . . then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction" (Job 33:15, 16). The prophets of old had visions as an inseparable part of the prophetic role—Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Iddo, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zech-

ariah. The same is true in the New Testament, such as with Stephen, Paul, Peter, and John. Going back, take the prophet Daniel for example:

Dan. 2:19—"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night *vision*."

7:2, 3—"I saw in my *vision* by night, and, behold, . . . four great beasts."

8:2—"I saw in a *vision*, and I was by the river of Ulai."

10:7—"I Daniel alone saw the *vision*: for the men that were with me saw not the *vision*."

And in the New Testament we read:

Luke 1:22—"They perceived that he [Zacharias] had seen a *vision* in the temple."

Acts 7:55—Stephen "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

9:10—"To him [Ananias] said the Lord in a *vision*."

10:11—Peter "saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending."

16:9—"A *vision* appeared to Paul in the night."

18:9—"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a *vision*."

But note particularly John the revelator. Practically the entire Apocalypse was presented to John in vision. Just observe: In Revelation 9:17 John said, "I saw the horses in the *vision*, and them that sat on them." And in a series of unparal-leled views John saw Christ amid the golden candlesticks, the twenty-four elders, the seven lamps, the sea of glass, the four living creatures, the sealed book, the seven seals, the sealing, the seven trumpets, the temple, the two witnesses, the beasts, the woman, the dragon, the flying angels, Babylon's fall, the seven vials, the Second Advent, the harvest, the two resurrections, the binding of Satan and his loosing, the lake of fire, the destruction of death and *hadēs*, the New Jerusalem, and the new heaven and the new earth, with the river and tree of life in the *Paradise of God*—constituting a matchless over-all panorama of the plan of salvation and its triumph. That is the scope of the "visions" of God to the seer of Patmos.

4. PAUL'S VISION OF HEAVEN MATCHED BY ISAIAH, DANIEL, JOHN.—Specifically, Isaiah "saw also the Lord sitting upon a

throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1). Daniel also saw the throne of the Most High in Heaven and the coming judgment scenes:

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:9, 10).

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him" (vs. 13, 14).

John the revelator likewise specifically saw the "throne" of God in Heaven, with the tree of life overspreading the river of life in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1, 2). The question, then, is inescapable and unanswerable: If Isaiah, Daniel, and John all saw the throne of God in Heaven, and heard words spoken there *in vision*, why could not Paul, likewise *in vision*, see and hear, without involving the extraneous claim of his soul's actually leaving his body? Isaiah, Daniel, and John were living men, albeit prophets, and continued to live and work on after their visions. Why then was not Paul the prophet functioning in the same way, according to the specified method and pattern of visions?

5. ABSURDITY OF "SOUL'S SEPARATION" THEORY.—This Pauline passage expressly concerns "visions" and "revelations" received from the Lord. This particular "vision" was evidently the most remarkable Paul ever experienced. He was given a view of "paradise," in the "third heaven." It was so real, so alive and vivid, that he could not tell whether he had been transported bodily to Paradise or whether it was in reality merely a vision, presented before his mind by the Holy Spirit.

Two possibilities only are brought to view by the text—either actual transportation to Paradise or the viewing of Heaven in vision. But notice the involvements either way: (1) If Paul

was taken to Paradise alive, then he was not dead, and the episode would have no bearing on the question of consciousness in death. (2) And if it were, instead, a "vision," common to prophets throughout Old Testament times, neither would that prove consciousness in death, for Paul was alive at the time. In either case, it does not support the Immortal-Soulist theory.

6. PREPOSTEROUS CONCLUSIONS INVOLVED.—The question at issue is reduced to one point: *What is the meaning of the expression, "out of the body"?* As stated, modern Immortal-Soulists assert that it is the immortal soul, or spirit, going out from the body—soul travel—and its existence for a time in a separate, conscious, perceptive condition, independent of, and apart from, the body. But note what such an allegation involves.

According to the view of such proponents, the separation of the soul from the body takes place at death—the customary definition of death. In fact, in their view there can be no separation of soul from body, without death resulting.

But would anyone contend that Paul did not know whether he had *died*, and had had a *resurrection*? Yet that would have had to happen if the words "out of the body" meant a trans-aerial flight of Paul's soul to Paradise and back. It would mean that his soul went off to the "third heaven" while his body lay in Tarsus (or wherever it was)—a corpse upon the earth. And when Paul's "soul" returned, he must have undergone a restoration from the dead. Such a presumption is, of course, untenable. Therefore, "out of the body" obviously does *not* mean entrance of the separated body into a temporary state of death.

The expression simply means that Paul had a "vision"—a condition in which to his mind, controlled by the Spirit during the time of the vision, were presented scenes so realistic that he seemed to be there in person, viewing the actual spectacle itself and hearing the graphic words spoken.

It is to be remembered that vivid, realistic, natural dreams crudely illustrate how this could be. The case of John the Be-



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The Grasp for Power, Which Has Marked the Centuries, Is to Characterize the Last Days of Human History as the Age Draws to Its Close.

loved in Revelation 17 is a striking example. He seemed to be present, viewing events wholly future, and which could not have been contemporaneous—for they were restricted to the “last days” of time. Meantime, John was all the while alive bodily on Patmos. Similarly with Paul.

But such are the lengths to which some go, and the absurdities in which they involve themselves, in seeking to sustain a preconceived Platonic theory brought over from Paganism into Jewry, and then into Christianity. The passage affords no proof that there is an immortal soul in man, that can live on in a conscious, sensate state, while the mortal body becomes lifeless or insensate, or crumbles back to dust.

II. (Phil. 1:20-24): “To Depart, and to Be With Christ”

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SOUND INTERPRETATION.—To understand with certainty the revealed message of God on any given topic or passage of Scripture, one needs to have before

him all the pertinent statements and principles of the Word bearing on the subject. And the true conclusion will always be one that fits every important statement and underlying principle *without forcing the language, or the thought*—just as a key will be recognized as the right one when it penetrates and turns a given lock without forcing any of its various wards. So with God's Word. When a key is found that harmoniously explains every expression of a given passage, without forcing the language or twisting the meaning, one may know that he has found the true interpretative key.

The tragedy is that some, instead of following Scripture, seek to compel Scripture to follow them, putting the figurative for the literal or the literal for the figurative—or construing an isolated text in opposition to the fundamental teaching of Scripture in general, and to Paul in particular in the instance we are about to examine.

Surely every truth lover will agree that it is far more important to maintain the harmony of the Sacred Writings than to defend a dogma at all costs, even to involving the Scriptures in fatal contradiction. We must always interpret the uncertain by the certain, and not vice versa. And always in accordance with the Word. "To the law and to the testimony," if they are made to speak out of accord with this Word, it is because there is no true light in the exposition (Isa. 8:20).

2. PASSAGE REGARDED AS BULWARK OF IMMORTAL-SOULISM.—Philippians 1:20-24 is, by many Immortal-Soulists, considered to be the strongest text in the Bible in favor of natural immortality—primarily the expression, "To depart, and to be with Christ" (v. 23). Such proponents contend that Paul expected, immediately upon death, to go at once into the presence of Christ—on the premise that the soul lives on endlessly, and separately, in a conscious state after the death of the physical organism. Thus the *real* Paul would "depart."

Paul does not, however, indicate that it is his "soul" or "spirit" that would depart. The "I" of his desire and the "my" of his departure indicate the *whole person*. He here makes no

separation of body and soul. It is to be conceded that if this expression stood alone, it might give that impression. *But it does not stand alone.* It must be understood in the light of Paul's teaching elsewhere that death is a "sleep," and that reunion with Christ takes place at, and only at, the Second Advent and its attendant *resurrection, or translation—and not before.*

Paul's desire "to depart, and to be with Christ" must receive its interpretation from Paul's own fuller terms of specification elsewhere recorded. When rightly understood the testimony of Scripture will be harmonious, and never self-contradictory. But the Immortal-Soulist claim is that a person, by his immortal spirit, goes immediately at death to be with the Lord. That, however, is contrary to Paul's own explicit explanation in 1 Thessalonians 4, which stipulates an entirely different manner of entry into Christ's presence, by an altogether different and wholly contrary means.

3. THE PROBLEM PASSAGE IN ITS ENTIRETY.—Here is the text of this famous "depart, and be with Christ" passage in Philippians:

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot [*gnōrizō*, "declare"] not. For I am in a strait [*sunechomai*, "being pressed"] betwixt [the] two [living and dying], having a desire to depart [*analousai*, "return"], and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. 1:20-24).

But first, let us get the historical setting and circumstances for this unique epistle and this particular passage.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR PHILIPPIAN EPISTLE.—The background for Paul's famous Philippian problem passage is this: Some ten years had passed since Paul had preached the gospel at Philippi. During his third missionary journey Paul was beaten by a mob at Jerusalem and brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30). Paul there skillfully divided the



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The Second Coming of Christ in Delivering Glory Is the Blessed Hope of the Ages, the Desire of All Saints Who Await the Coming King. He Will Then Bestow Our Immortality.

opposing Pharisees and Sadducees by referring to the doctrine of the resurrection. He was then sent, under duress, to Felix the governor. But his trial was deferred for two years, being resumed under Festus in A.D. 59. Paul then appealed to Caesar, and Festus ordered him sent to Rome for trial.

On the voyage Paul suffered shipwreck, and wintered at Malta (Acts 27). Upon reaching Rome, he was kept in custody, during which time he wrote the "captivity epistles" (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians). This was toward the end of his imprisonment, as his trial drew near, probably in A.D. 62. As the time approached when his case would be heard before the high tribunal, more rigid conditions of confinement were im-

posed. Nevertheless, a tone of joy and rejoicing runs like a golden thread throughout the Philippian epistle, just as grace does in Ephesians. Paul was, however, acquitted. The epistles to Timothy, with their remarkable immortality statement, were written later. Such is the historical setting. Now let us analyze the passage.

5. THE TWIN GATEWAYS TO GLORY.—Paul determined that under all circumstances Christ should be magnified in his “*body*,” whether by his life or by his death. Life and death are here tied in, by Paul, with his *body*, not primarily his soul, or spirit. There is not a word in the entire recital about a separate soul or discarnate spirit. If Paul meant that his real, inner self was a conscious immortal soul, which would leave the body at death to go to be with the Lord, then, we ask, why did he not once say so some place in the *one hundred chapters* of his various epistles—comprising more than a third of the entire New Testament. But let us pause a moment for two texts.

Paul expressly declared, “*I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you*” (Acts 20:20). He did keep back, however, everything concerning any disembodied immortal soul or spirit. Such a Platonic concept he evidently did not consider “profitable” for the church. Again, he said, “*I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27). But he never uttered a single syllable about an immortal soul or a deathless spirit in man.

Consequently, such a notion cannot be considered as any part of the “counsel of God.” And Paul must be permitted to be in harmony with himself. This pre-eminent apostle would never stoop to being double in his language or deceitful in his witness. He placed his entire hope on *resurrection* or *translation* as the sole, conjoined gateway to glory.

6. PAUL'S “SO” PRECLUDES EVERY OTHER MEANS.—To the Thessalonians he wrote of this in its inseparable relation to the Second Advent:

“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* [at the Advent] shall be caught up together with them [the resurrected saints] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and *so* shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

The "so" (*houtōs*), which is emphatic in the original, emphasizes the fact that not by our *dying* but by our Lord's descending from Heaven, at His second advent, shall both the living saints and the sleeping saints enter the Lord's presence together in the grand home going. "So" means "in this way," "in this manner," "by this means." That is how we shall ever "be with the Lord." Therefore, when Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 describes the sole way and precise method by which we are to go to be with the Lord, he *thereby precludes every other means*. There is no other way save by (1) resurrection, or (2) translation. If there is, then Paul's language is misleading and untrue.

If we go to be with the Lord by means of our immortal spirit when we die, then we do not go by means of, and at, His visible coming and the miraculous *resurrection* of the dead and the translation *change* of the living. In such an event Paul is made to falsify and deceive. There is no way to avoid such a conclusion. It must be clear that the descent of the Lord from Heaven, the mighty shout, the voice of the archangel, the sound of the trump of God—and the resurrection of the dead, or the change of the living—do *not* take place at death.

III. Paul's Baffling Dilemma—"Life" or "Death"

1. CHRIST "MAGNIFIED" BY EITHER LIFE OR DEATH.—Paul was "in a *strait*" (*sunechomai*, "being pressed") "betwixt" the *two* alternatives of "to *live*," or "to *die*." "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," he wrote. In the context Paul had just said that Christ would be "*magnified* in my *body*, whether it be by *life*, or by *death*." So, if Paul *lived*, Christ would be "*magnified*" (Phil. 1:20), and the church profited

(v. 24). If he *died*, Christ would still be "magnified" (v. 20), and it would still be "gain" to Christ.

Paul had been beaten eight times and stoned once. He had been in perils of waters, robbers, the Jews, false Christians, the heathen, perils in the city, the wilderness, and on the sea, and had been times innumerable in weariness, pain, sickness, hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness (2 Cor. 11:23-27). He had a desire to end this mortal pilgrimage. He could well say that to die is "gain," for he would then be at rest. But the cause of God and his sympathetic heart drew him to remain here in labor if acquitted.

On the other hand, his own weariness and sufferings were an urge for rest in the sleep of death. He was in a quandary. These strong pulls were just about balanced, though he did think it more needful for him to remain to give the benefit of his counsel and labors to the church. Thus "gain" to the cause of Christ would come by martyrdom, and there would be gain to himself as a martyr through the resurrection, for in his affliction any form of death would be a release. Thus he reasoned.

2. INVOLVEMENTS AND ADVANTAGES OF DEATH.—To Paul death was a state of unconsciousness for the sleeper, as he so often and clearly taught, with no conscious lapse of time between death and the resurrection. He knew that, after he had lost consciousness in death, the next moment of awareness would be the hearing of the voice of the returning Christ, calling him to arise and be with his Lord forever. The first face he would look upon would be that of his beloved Life-giver. Thus he could say, "For me . . . to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). But how could death be "gain" if it reduced him to a state of unconsciousness? Just as it would be to Job, who entreated, "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave" (Job 14:13).

The intervening period between death and the return of the Lord would, for the sleeper, be annihilated, and the glories of the eternal world, through the resurrection, would open instantly, as it were, upon his view. The waiting period, however

long, is an utter blank—seemingly but a moment of time, like the twinkling of an eye. The very moment he would regain consciousness, upon the call of the Life-giver, he would be in the presence of Christ. So he need not actually wait a single *conscious* moment, for, we repeat, those who are sound asleep have no awareness of the passing of time.

3. CHRIST WILL CALL FORTH FROM DUSTY BEDS.—The Lord Jesus Christ Himself went down into *death*. But it was not the prospect of death that filled Him with joy—except as He was fulfilling His Father's will and providing salvation for man. His joy was over the fact that God would not *leave* His soul in *she'ól* (the grave) nor suffer His "Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:9, 10).

Christ "passed into the heavens" (Heb. 4:14), and now ministers for us in the presence of the Father (Rom. 7:23-27). But that was through the designated *resurrection* and *ascension* provision. On the contrary, the worthies of old *passed into the earth*, the grave, and are dependent upon the living Son of God to come forth from the heavens to call them from their graves (John 5:28, 29). Until then they have no share in "any thing that is done under the sun" (Eccl. 9:6), for "the dead know not any thing" (v. 5), and there is no "knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (v. 10). That was the Scripture dictum of Paul's day—the Old Testament.

4. ONLY TWO DESIGNATED WAYS TO GLORY.—The intermediate state has been arbitrarily injected into this passage, whereas the text is totally silent on the condition of the dead. That is not the point. Surely, if all the prophets and apostles, and saints and martyrs were already in Heaven, death would indeed be more desirable—if that were the pathway to Heaven.

It is commonly *assumed* by the Immortal-Soulist that one goes into the presence of Christ immediately upon death. But the text states nothing of the kind. And a whole battery of other texts affirm the contrary fact that we gain immortality and go into His presence only at the Second Advent and the concurrent resurrection.

Entrance into Christ's presence is therefore a *future* event, to be experienced simultaneously by all saints alike—except for those privileged few who have a prior *special resurrection* (like Moses), or *special translation* (like Elijah), both of whom appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. But in either case, it is still only by resurrection or translation. Clearly, then, it is by *resurrection* or *translation*, there being no other way of going to be “with Christ” (John 5:21-29; 1 Thess. 4:17). Paul does not deny or contradict his own testimony.

5. PAUL'S MULTIPLE TESTIMONY AS TO “WHEN.”—The notion that during the *state of death* believers are “with Christ” in a *state of life* in Heaven, involves an inescapable denial of one of the cardinal doctrines of Scripture—the sleep of all the dead, in *gravedom*. Further, if the deceased saints were already with Christ in glory, and were able to see Him “as he is,” they would already have been *changed* into the “likeness” of Christ (1 John 3:2). But here is the timing for that change according to Scripture: “But we know that, *when he* [Christ] *shall appear*, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (v. 2).

It would follow that, on the premise of the Immortal-Soulist, the saints would already possess the fullest transformation that they could ever look for and obtain, and thus long *anticipate* Christ's actual personal advent. But such a view brings a denial of an antecedent resurrection uniformly taught by Paul. Either that, or it implies that the resurrection occurs at death, and is already *past* (2 Tim. 2:18), which Paul likewise condemned as a heresy.

Paul repeatedly went on record as to *when* the Christian goes to be with his Lord. Here is the Pauline testimony. It is an eight-strand cable of evidence—so strong that it cannot be broken:

Rom. 8:23—At the redemption of the body.

1 Cor. 5:5—In the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Cor. 15:51-55—At the last trump.



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2 Cor. 5:2—When we are clothed upon with our house from Heaven.

Col. 3:4—When Christ our life shall appear.

1 Thess. 4:16, 17—When the Lord descends from Heaven with a shout and the dead are raised, and the living translated.

2 Thess. 2:1—At the coming of the Lord.

2 Tim. 4:7, 8—At "that day," by which term he designated the *day* of Christ's appearing.

6. RESURRECTION, NOT DEATH, USHERS INTO PRESENCE OF

CHRIST.—We are told there will be “fulness of joy” in Christ’s presence (Ps. 16:11). But those who are fallen asleep are *not yet* enjoying that presence. If they were, the resurrection would be unnecessary. And as stated, Paul makes all life beyond the grave depend on resurrection. Thus the saints of old were “tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they *might obtain a better resurrection*” (Heb. 11:35). Again, “if there be no resurrection of the dead,” “then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (1 Cor. 15:13, 18). They are consequently not in Heaven. And once more, the sleeping saints of the ages do not go to Jesus before the saints living at the time of the Advent (1 Thess. 4:14-17).

Therefore it is not at death but at the resurrection of the dead that the saints will be ushered into the presence of Christ. And for this Christ must first return from Heaven. It is only when He comes again that He will receive us unto Himself (John 14:3). Again, “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, *then shall ye also appear with him in glory*” (Col. 3:4). Paul told the Romans that he, with them, awaited “the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). This is the glorious “change” about which Paul wrote to the Philippians, when he said: “A Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory” (Phil. 3:20, 21, A.R.V.).

That occurs only at the Second Advent (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

IV. Paul’s Great Third Choice—Translation

1. TRANSLATION FAR BETTER THAN LIVING OR DYING.—We should now note carefully Paul’s comparison when he speaks of “departing” to be with Christ as “far better.” It was *not* that to die was better than to live, and that he therefore desired to die. The desire of his heart was to be “with Christ,” or “with the Lord,” which is vastly different.

To the *two* alternatives (to “live” or to “die”), upon which he could not make up his mind, Paul now adds a *third*

choice, which was his deep desire—and that was to “depart” and “to be with Christ,” which is “very far better” (Phil. 1:23, R.V., A.R.V.). That would be to be caught up with Christ, *through translation*, to meet the Lord in the air when Christ comes to be “glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day” (2 Thess. 1:10). This sound solution has been set forth by various reputable scholars back through the years, with no theory on the nature of men to sustain.

This was “*very far* [*pollō mallon*, “much more”; “far, far”—Weymouth] better”—a double comparative. “Better” than what? Clearly, than *either* of the two he had just mentioned (living or dying). Therefore it cannot mean *death*, but some event or means by which alone Paul could be with Christ—by being “caught up” alive (1 Thess. 4:16, 17) through translation, either at the Advent, or a special translation, as with Enoch and Elijah. Paul had been in a strait between the first two, having difficulty in choosing between them. But the third alternative ended all indecision.

Paul’s “desire to depart” was mentioned in the midst of his discussion of the alternatives of *life* amid many perils, and *dying* and being at rest. He at first did not know which he should choose. But there appears this third consideration, which was “far, far better”—to “depart,” or go to be with Christ through translation, and thus be personally with Christ without dying. That was his heart’s deepest desire.

2. DESIRED TO BE LOOSED, SET FREE FROM EARTH.—The deep feelings, yes, the fervent desire, of the great apostle in his lonely confinement, as he contemplated this blessed hope of being with Christ, was to “depart” (*analuō*),² as of a ship from port, or a prisoner from confinement. Paul’s wish was not to become a discarnate ghost-spirit, as some have interpreted, but to realize the Christian’s hope. It was one of the two designated

² *Analuō*—to loosen, as of a ship from her moorings, so as to depart and return. Thus with the classical Greek. And this is the invariable meaning in the Septuagint, and in the Apocrypha as well. On the latter see *Tobit* ii:9; *Judith* xiii:1; *1 Esdras* iii:3; *Wisdom* ii:1; etc. Also Josephus, *Antiquities* vi, 4, 1.

means of being with Christ—there being no other way. There is thus no conflict or inconsistency here.

Paul wished to be loosed, or *set free, from earth*. He earnestly longed not to live longer *on* the earth, nor to die and be buried *in* the earth, but to be caught up *from* the earth, to meet the Lord *in the air*, and to be “for ever with the Lord.” He did not, however, live to see the fulfillment of his heart’s desire, as he suffered a martyr’s death. But he “died in faith,” awaiting the “crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give” him “*at that day*: and not to” him “only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

So, if Paul “departed” to be with Christ, then he would be *translated*, and thus be personally with Christ *without* dying. This third consideration was assuredly “very far better.”

And why did Paul have a desire to “depart”?

Because he knew the suffering, toil, and trial here would then be over. He would be released from his almost-unbearable burdens.

3. RELATION OF PROBLEM PASSAGES TO WHOLE OF SCRIPTURE.—In summation: To a whole army, as it were, of explicit witnesses, has been opposed a rear-guard action of a few seemingly dubious passages, which are by some invested with a meaning wholly foreign to the general tenor not only of the specific book of which they are a part but, more than that, of the New Testament as a whole—and even beyond that, of the Old Testament testimony as well. Yet some would, by such debatable passages, seek not only to counterbalance but even to outweigh hundreds of other explicit texts.

It is as if to contend that, on the scales, a pound outweighs a ton. The inconclusiveness of the contention is self-evident. But in reality, these texts do not contradict the rest. Under scrutiny they fail to give support to such a thesis, as our scrutiny of Philippians 1:20-24 attests.

So, to understand debatable passages we must first begin with passages whose meanings are incontrovertibly clear. Then,

once the key is discovered, it will be possible to unlock otherwise baffling passages. If the key is found that unlocks every passage to which it is applied—without any forcing—making all harmonious, the conclusion becomes irresistible that we have found the true and divine key. The principle of Conditionalism is that key.

Unique Witness of Epistles of Peter and John

I. Peter's Portrayal of Cataclysmic End Events

The apostle Peter—man of action, ever ardent and impulsive—was one of the earliest of the original “twelve” to be called as an apostle. He followed Christ through all His travels and teachings and witnessed His miracles. He was the first to confess Christ to be the Son of God. He sought to walk on the water. He became one of the chosen three to witness the transfiguration, and heard Christ's great sermon on the end of the world, or age (in Matthew 24).

Peter thrice denied Christ, but repented, was soundly converted, and became a strengthener of his brethren (Luke 22: 32). He was the chosen preacher at Pentecost, and wrought miracles, even restoring the dead. His vision at Joppa opened the door to the Gentiles (Acts 10:11-34; 15:14). And finally, according to Christ's prediction, he died a martyr's death, crucified head down.

Peter heard Christ's constant teachings on eternal life. And when the disciples were turning away from Christ—during the crisis with the Jews over Christ's claim to be the “Life” and the “Resurrection,” and the “Living Bread from Heaven”—and Christ asked the disciples if they, too, would go away, it was Peter who answered, “To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of *eternal life*” (John 6:68). And into his two short epistles, written to the Christian Jews of the dispersion, much vital truth on the destiny of man is packed.

The Ardent Apostle Peter Bears Confirmatory Testimony to the Truth of Conditionalism as Borne by All the Other Apostles, and Before Them by the Prophets of Old.



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1. IMPOSING OUTLINE IN SWEEPING STROKES.—With bold, sweeping strokes Peter sketches in the outline of the “last things,” leading up to “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4). He deals particularly with the “last time” (v. 5), and the final phase of the salvation “ready to be revealed.” This includes the climactic second “*appearing* [*apocalypsei*, “unveiling,” “revelation,” “manifestation”] of Jesus Christ” (v. 7), or “revelation” (v. 13), prophesied by the prophets, with the “glory that should follow” (v. 11).

Peter goes back to the first advent, when our Lord made all this possible, as He paid our redemption price (“the precious blood of Christ”), who was slain and raised up (vs. 18-21). Then he touches on our imperative new birth (v. 23). And he stresses Christ as the “living stone,” and “chief corner stone,” but becoming the “rock of offence” to many (chap. 2:

4-8). Peter presents Him as our great sinless Substitute (vs. 22-24), the "just [dying] for the unjust, . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (chap. 3:18) at the "resurrection," but "who is [now] gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers' being made subject unto him" (vs. 21, 22).

Peter then presents Christ, our present mediator, as ere-long "ready to judge the quick and the dead" (chap. 4:5), and declares that "the *end of all things is at hand* [*ēggiken*, "approaching," "drawing near"]" (v. 7). He tells of the joy of the saints "when his [Christ's] glory shall be revealed" (v. 13). But he warns of "judgment," beginning at the "house of God" (v. 17), and of the fateful end "of them that obey not the gospel of God," our "faithful Creator" (vs. 17, 19). And he again stresses the day when "the chief Shepherd shall appear," and we "receive a crown of glory" (chap. 5:4).

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF CENTURIES THAT PRECEDE.—In his second epistle, after mentioning the precious promises of God that enable us to escape the world's "corruption" (2 Peter 1:4), Peter again leads up to "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (v. 11). He then refers to the Spirit-inspired prophecies that light up the darksome pathway of the centuries, until the "day star" shall appear (vs. 19-21). He touches on the "damnable heresies" (chap. 2:1) that mark and mar the centuries, and pervert the faith of some. And he touches on the "angels that sinned," confined in the darkness of *Tartarus*, "reserved unto judgment" (v. 4)—and how the "unjust" among men are likewise reserved "unto the day of judgment to be punished" (v. 9). They will then "receive the reward of unrighteousness" (v. 13).

Next Peter comes to the last-day *scoffers* (*empaiktai*, "mockers"), openly doubting the promise of Christ's coming (chap. 3:3), contending for the now familiar "uniformity" of all things from the beginning, and willfully denying the evidence

¹ Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 2:10, 15; Titus 3:1.

of the cataclysm of the Noachian deluge "whereby the *world* that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (v. 6).

3. COMING DELUGE OF FIRE IN "DAY OF THE LORD."—

Then comes Peter's tremendous eschatological prophecy, blending in with Christ's great last-day prophecy of Matthew 24, and anticipating John's fourfold description (Rev. 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8) of the coming lake of fire. Here is Peter's portrayal. He had just referred to the prediluvian world.

"The *world* [*kosmos*, abode of mankind] that then was ["of old"—v. 5], being *overflowed* with water, *perished*: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are *kept in store*, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and *perdition* [*apōleias*, "utter and final ruin"] of ungodly men." "The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should *perish*, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:6, 7, 9).

Thus Peter comes to the tremendous "*day of the Lord*" or "*day of God*," with his vivid portrayal of coming destruction; when, in the overwhelming fierceness of the fires of Gehenna, the earth actually melts:

"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* [*katakaēsetai*, "to ashes"]. 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* [*speudontas*, "hastening"] the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall *melt* with fervent heat?² Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for *new heavens* and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13).

² This corresponds to such frequent Old Testament predictions of earth's final destruction as:

"They [the earth and the heavens, v. 25] shall perish . . . shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them" (Ps. 102:26).

"The earth is utterly broken down . . . clean dissolved . . . moved exceedingly. . . . The earth shall reel to and fro . . . be removed like a cottage . . . shall fall, and not rise again" (Isa. 24:19, 20).

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner" (Isa. 51:6).

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1).

So Old Testament and New Testament predictions are in harmony on the coming destruction.

Peter thus presents the histories and destinies of the *three* worlds:

(1) "The world that *then was*" (2 Peter 3:5, 6), that is, before the Flood.

(2) "The heavens and the earth, *which are now*" (v. 7) needs no explanation.

(3) The "*new heavens and a new earth*" to come (v. 13), that will continue on through all eternity as the home of the redeemed.

Thus the awful judgment of an earlier age through death and destruction by water is to be surpassed by the more awful day of eventual judgment to come of death and destruction by fire in the "*day of the Lord,*" and the destruction of the ungodly. Then Peter closes with a warning against so *wresting* (*streblousin*, "straining," "turning," "twisting") the Scriptures as to result in the destruction of the distorter (v. 16).

Thus, in a lesser way, Peter traverses the same general eschatological pathway later given in greater fullness and detail by John, the seer of Patmos, as well as by Paul. There is complete agreement.

So Peter declares that fires now hidden in the heart of the earth will burst forth in the final flames of the judgment day and do their appointed work. Then sin and sinners will pass away forever.

II. Problem Text (1 Peter 3:19)—Preaching to "Spirits in Prison"

1. DOUBTFUL TEXTS INVOKED TO SUPPORT DOUBTFUL POSITIONS.—Certain texts are quoted from Peter to sustain the Innate-Immortality postulate. Actually, they are thus placed in outright conflict with the general tenor of the teaching of Scripture. And concepts that are at variance with the prevailing witness of Scripture are supported only by an unwarranted construction of a few texts that are admittedly difficult of interpretation, or are susceptible of two renderings. One of



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Peter, Powerful Preacher at Pentecost, Was Equally Emphatic on Life Only in Christ, Bestowed at the Resurrection.



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Peter's Message of Restoration and Life Was Ever Centered in Christ as the Source of Life Eternal for Sinners Transformed Into Saints.

these is 1 Peter 3:19—the “spirits in prison.” This is the full statement in context:

“For Christ also hath once *suffered* [*apethanen*, “died”] for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being *put to death* in the flesh, but *quicken*ed by the Spirit: by which [the Spirit] also he went and *preached* [*ekēruxen*, “to herald,” “announce,” “proclaim publicly”] unto the *spirits in prison*; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls [persons] were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

Some Immortal-Soulists hold that the souls of the righteous dead were liberated by our Lord when He descended into Hades at His death, and then ascended with Him to Heaven; and that all who have died since that time, if purified from all sin, go directly to Heaven. They usually hold,

however, that these souls will come back for their bodies at the time of the general resurrection. And part of this theory is the contention that Christ's "spirit" preached the gospel, *during the interval between His death and resurrection*, to the "spirits" of antediluvian times, confined to this Hadean prison.

Peter speaks frankly of "some things" in Paul's writings that are "hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16), which some "wrest . . . unto their own destruction." Paul might have responded in kind concerning Peter's writings. And this passage is one of them. Let us consider it in some detail. But we must beware lest one text be allowed, by reading Platonic Immortal-Soulism into it, to check the whole central current of consistent Scripture teaching.

2. PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS OF PAPAL POSITION.—From the foregoing verses (1 Peter 3:18-20), the contention is made that the soul, or spirit, is immortal, and continues to live on in uninterrupted consciousness after death. And, during the interval between Christ's death and resurrection, it is held that Christ's conscious spirit, His real being (while His body lay in the grave), descended into *hadēs*, the abode of the allegedly living dead, to preach to the disembodied conscious "spirits" of the antediluvians imprisoned there, with a view to giving them a second chance, and thus to escape from torment.

That is the basic contention. The question must pertinently be asked at this point, even on such a premise, Why did Christ go down to "hell" (*hadēs*, "the grave") to preach to the damned spirits there, some twenty-four hundred years after the Flood, since their probation passed at death, according to uniform Bible testimony?

The implications of such a position are profound and revolutionary. Some, we are confident, have never thought them through. If the dead are consciously alive—and can be preached to, and can be benefited by such preaching, and can repent and be saved out of torment—then the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, or its equivalent, is validated, and the modern contention of probation after death is substan-

tiated. Those are the momentous implications. Such a proposition is obviously of sufficient importance as to merit careful examination. First, note some basic facts.

3. CHRIST WENT NOWHERE IN DEATH; PREACHED TO NO ONE.—As to Christ's condition in death, Christ's body was put into the grave, or sepulcher (*hadēs*, or gravedom—Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:31), while He commended His "spirit" to God (Luke 23:46; cf. Ps. 31:5). According to the apostle Peter, who had talked with Jesus after the resurrection (John 21:7-22), and who was the preacher at Pentecost (Acts 2:14ff.), Jesus' soul (Greek *psuchē* equivalent here to Hebrew *nephesh*, Jesus Himself) was in the grave from death until the resurrection. Quoting David (Ps. 16:10), Peter said of Christ:

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell* [*hadēs*, "the grave"], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." "He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:27, 30).

Note that "my soul" in the first clause is paralleled by "thine Holy One" in the second clause. It was Jesus Himself that slept in the tomb.

Christ went nowhere and performed no action between His death and His "quicken," or resurrection, for He was asleep in death.

4. CHRIST WAS MADE ALIVE; DID NOT CONTINUE ALIVE DURING INTERIM.—The word "quicken" (*zōopoieō*), here emphasized in 1 Peter 3:18, is the same used in Romans 8:11:

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also *quicken* [*zōopoiēsei*] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

According to this, God brought again our Lord from the dead by the Holy Spirit—the same Spirit by whom His followers are to be raised at the last day. The "quicken" here means "to impart life, to make alive." He was put to death in the flesh and *made alive* by the Spirit. To contend that He *continued* alive would be to nullify, or invalidate, the declaration that He was *made alive*, or brought back to life, and for a

time *had been dead*—from the cross until His resurrection “from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

He says of Himself, in Revelation 1:18, “I am he that liveth, and *was dead*; and, behold, I *am alive for evermore.*”

Incontestably Christ was put to death. He was quickened by the Spirit. He went and preached to spirits in prison. But His preaching was *not* between His death and resurrection. Thus the contention collapses that this occurred between the time when Christ laid down His life for our sins “and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). Any other affirmation on the part of man is pure assumption, in conflict with Holy Scripture.

5. WHEN AND TO WHOM DID CHRIST PREACH?—If, as stated in the text (1 Peter 3:18), Christ was “quickened [raised to life] by the Spirit,” it is equally clear that it was by the Spirit that He did the preaching mentioned here. The text reads “quickened by the Spirit: *by which* also he went and preached.” Since the text says that the preaching was done “*when* once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,” it must be Noah’s generation that heard the preaching of Christ through the Spirit.

In the account of the condition of the earth before the Flood, the Bible records, “The Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:3). Since according to Peter, Noah was a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5), it follows that the Spirit preached through Noah just as He has preached to every generation to whom God sent His human messengers. And it is Christ through the Spirit who is said to have done this. Here is no conflict, for Christ is the mediator of all communication to earth from Heaven.

But how can these antediluvians be called “spirits”? We will let Dr. Adam Clarke, well-known commentator, answer this question. After remarking that the phrase, “he went and preached,” should be understood to mean, “by the ministry of Noah,” he goes on to explain:

"The word *pneumasi, spirits*, is supposed to render this view of the subject improbable, because this must mean *disembodied spirits*; but this certainly does not follow, for *the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. xii, 23, certainly means *righteous men*, and *men still in the Church militant*; and the *Father of spirits*, Heb. xii, 9, means *men still in the body*; and *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, Num. xvi, 22, and xvii, 16, means *men not in a disembodied state.*"³

III. Christ Truly "Died" According to Prediction, Fulfillment, Attestation

It is essential to establish the fact that Christ *died* on Calvary—truly *died*. And no inner or real self, or being, as a *separate, continuing entity*, lived on during the period between His giving up of the "ghost," or "expiring," and His resurrection on the "third day." Observe the conclusive Biblical evidence. Note the italicized words.

1. EXPLICIT OT PROPHECIES OF FORTHCOMING DEATH.—
Here are six explicit Old Testament predictions:

- Isa. 53:7—"He is brought as a lamb to the *slaughter.*"
- Isa. 53:8—"He was *cut off* out of the land of the living."
- Isa. 53:10—"Thou shalt make his soul an *offering for sin.*"
- Isa. 53:12—"He hath *poured out his soul unto death.*"
- Dan. 9:26—"Shall Messiah be *cut off*, but not for himself."
- Zech. 13:7—"Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."

2. JESUS' OWN UNEQUIVOCAL PREDICTIONS OF HIS DEATH.—
Now follow about a score of Christ's own personal New Testament predictions of His approaching death and His designated period in the grave. Again follow the italicized words. (Those in small capitals indicate the time element.)

Matt. 12:40—"So shall the Son of man be THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS in the *heart of the earth.*"

Matt. 16:21—"Be *killed*, and be raised again the THIRD DAY."

Matt. 17:23—"They shall *kill* him, and the THIRD DAY he shall be raised again."

Matt. 20:28—"The Son of man came . . . to *give his life a ransom for many.*"

Matt. 21:39—"And they caught him . . . and *slew* him."

³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary*, on 1 Peter 3:19. (Italics his.)

Matt. 26:2—"The Son of man is betrayed to be *crucified*."

Matt. 26:28—"My *blood* . . . which is *shed* for many."

Matt. 26:38—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, *even unto death*."

Mark 8:31—"Rejected . . . and be *killed*, and after **THREE DAYS** rise again."

Mark 9:31—"Shall *kill* him; and after that he is *killed*, he shall rise the **THIRD DAY**."

Mark 10:34—"Shall *kill* him: and the **THIRD DAY** he shall rise again."

Luke 9:22—"And be *slain*, and be raised the **THIRD DAY**."

Luke 22:15—"Before I *suffer*."

Luke 24:46—"It behoved Christ to *suffer*, and to rise from the dead the **THIRD DAY**."

John 10:11—"The good shepherd *giveth his life* for the sheep."

John 10:15—"I *lay down my life* for the sheep."

John 10:17—"I *lay down my life*, that I might take it again."

John 11:51—"Prophesied that Jesus should *die* for that nation."

John 12:7—"Against the day of my *burying*."

John 12:32—"Lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

John 12:32, 33—"Lifted up from the earth" "signifying what *death he should die*."

John 15:13—"That a man *lay down his life* for his friends."

3. INSPIRATION'S RECORD OF CHRIST'S DEATH.—And here follows the unimpeachable evidence of competent eyewitnesses as to His death:

Matt. 27:50—"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, *yielded up the ghost* [*aphêken to pneuma*, "yielded up the spirit"]."

Matt. 27:57, 58—"Joseph . . . went to Pilate, and begged the *body* of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the *body* to be delivered."

Mark 15:37—"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and *gave up the ghost* [*exepneusen*, "expired"]."

Mark 15:39—"And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out ["with a loud voice"], and *gave up the ghost* [*exepneusen*, "to breathe out, expire, die"], he said, Truly this man was the Son of God."

Mark 15:43—"Joseph . . . craved the *body* of Jesus."

Mark 15:44, 45—"Pilate . . . calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while *dead*. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the *body* to Joseph."

Luke 23:46—"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my *spirit* [*pneuma*]: and having said thus, he *gave up the ghost* [*exepneusen*, "expired, died"]"⁴ (cf. Ps. 31:5).

⁴ Dr. Adam Clarke, commenting on the frequently used Biblical term, "gave up the ghost," says that it "signifies to pant for breath, to expire, to cease from breathing, or to breathe one's last."—*Commentary*, on Gen. 25:8.



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The Joys of the Redeemed in the Glorious New Heavens and New Earth Will Surpass All Human Imagination and Will Abide Forever.

Luke 23:52, 53—"This man [Joseph] went unto Pilate, and begged the *body* of Jesus. And he took it down . . . and *laid it in a sepulchre.*"

John 19:30—"Jesus . . . said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and *gave up the ghost.*"

John 19:33—"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he *was dead already.*"

According to the unvarying testimony of Scripture, Christ, as the voluntary substitute in death for sinners, was without any thought or activity while in the embrace of death, awaiting the summons of the life-giving Spirit—the Third Person of the Godhead—at His resurrection on the "*third day.*"

4. APOSTOLIC WITNESS TO CHRIST'S DEATH.—And here is the galaxy of supporting apostolic witnesses to Christ's death:

Acts 3:18—"That Christ should *suffer*, he hath so fulfilled."

Acts 17:3—"Christ must needs have *suffered*, and risen again from the dead."

Acts 20:28—"He hath *purchased* [the church of God] *with his own blood.*"

Acts 26:23—"That Christ should *suffer*, and . . . should rise from the dead."

Rom. 5:6—"Christ *died* for the ungodly."

Rom. 5:8—"While we were yet sinners, Christ *died* for us."

Rom. 5:10—"Reconciled . . . by the *death* of his Son, . . . saved by his life."

Rom. 6:5—"Planted together in the *likeness of his death.*"

Rom. 6:10—"In that he *died*, he *died* unto sin once."

Rom. 14:9—"To this end Christ both *died*, and rose, and revived [lived again]."

1 Cor. 1:23—"We preach Christ *crucified.*"

1 Cor. 2:2—"Jesus Christ, and him *crucified.*"

1 Cor. 5:7—"Christ our passover is *sacrificed* for us."

1 Cor. 15:3—"Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures."

1 Cor. 15:4—"That he was *buried*, and that he rose again the

THIRD DAY according to the scriptures."

2 Cor. 5:14—"One *died* for all."

2 Cor. 5:15—"He *died* for all."

Gal. 3:13—"Being made a *curse* for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that *hangeeth on a tree.*"

Eph. 1:7—"We have redemption through his *blood.*"

Eph. 2:16—"Reconcile both unto God in *one body by the cross.*"

Eph. 5:2—"Hath given himself for us an *offering* and a *sacrifice* to God."

Phil. 2:8—"Became obedient unto *death*, even the *death of the cross.*"

Col. 1:20—"Having made peace through the *blood of his cross.*"

Col. 1:22—"In the body of his flesh *through death.*"

1 Thess. 4:14—"Jesus *died* and rose again."

1 Thess. 5:9, 10—"Jesus Christ, who *died* for us."

Heb. 2:9—"Jesus . . . made a little lower than the angels for the *suffering of death.*"

Heb. 2:14—"That through *death* he might destroy him that had the power of death."

Heb. 7:27—"This he did once, when he *offered up* himself."

Heb. 9:12—"By his own *blood* he . . . obtained eternal redemption for us."

Heb. 9:26—"He appeared to put away sin by the *sacrifice* of himself."

Heb. 9:28—"Christ was once *offered* to bear the sins of many."

Heb. 10:10—"Sanctified through the *offering of the body of Jesus Christ* once for all."

Heb. 10:12—"Offered one *sacrifice* for sins for ever."

Heb. 12:2—"Endured the *cross*, despising the shame."

1 Peter 2:24—"Who his own self *bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*"

1 Peter 3:18—"Hath once *suffered* for sins . . . being *put to death* in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

1 Peter 4:1—"Christ hath *suffered* for us in the flesh."

To deny that Christ died is consequently to repudiate the whole irrefutable testimony of Holy Writ.

5. CHRIST'S POST-ASCENSION TESTIMONY FROM HEAVEN.—And here is the infallible witness of the risen, ascended Christ Himself that He was *dead*, but from the resurrection onward lives forevermore:

Rev. 1:18—"I am he that liveth, and *was dead*; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."

Rev. 2:8—"These things saith the first and the last, which *was dead*, and is alive."

Rev. 5:9—"Thou *wast slain*, and hast redeemed us to God by *thy blood.*"

Rev. 5:12—"Worthy is the Lamb that *was slain.*"

Rev. 7:14—"These are they which . . . have washed their robes, and made them white in the *blood of the Lamb.*"

Rev. 13:8—"The book of life of the Lamb *slain from the foundation of the world.*"

6. CHRIST'S DEATH ESTABLISHED, CERTIFIED, ATTESTED.—In the light of such an array of divine predictions of Old Testament prophets, iterated and reiterated New Testament forecasts by Jesus Himself, together with the inspired eyewitness record of His actual death and burial, and of multiple concurring apostolic witness, and finally of attestation from the ascended Christ Himself in Heaven, we *rest the case*. *Jesus* actually and truly *died!* And He rose therefrom on the "third day."

7. ALL IS LOST IF CHRIST DID NOT ACTUALLY DIE.—Now comes the tremendous alternative: *If* Christ did not Himself *truly, actually die*, as called for in the terms of atoning substitution—but only His body, while His spirit lived on as a continuing discarnate entity and busily visited the confined "spirits in prison" *during the interim between the alleged moment of His "death" and the "resurrection"* (within the "three

day" asserted and reasserted)—then the declared transaction of the cross is a travesty; and the veracity of God and of Christ is impugned.

The credibility of their characters is destroyed. And the sole basis of our hope of repentance, reconciliation, and atonement is canceled and nullified, and all the benefits springing from an atoning death are alike swept away. Then we are indeed left destitute of any sound hope and trustworthy expectation of redemption—past, present, and future.

Then the promises of God would be invalidated, the inspired assurances rendered null and void, and the justice of God impugned. And most sobering of all, Satan's claim, "Ye shall *not* surely die" (Gen. 3:4), would be vindicated and sustained. And God's solemn declaration, "Thou *shalt surely die*" (chap. 2:17), would stand discredited and disproved before the entire universe—His veracity shattered. That is the gravity and the essence of the issue. But let us examine these dread possibilities in greater depth and detail.

8. MULTIPLE BENEFITS ANNULLED IF CHRIST DID NOT DIE.—Look at the imposing array of promised benefits, here listed, all contingent upon Christ's *death*—but all canceled and lost if He did not truly die, but actually lived on. The terse point of the text is here listed, with the key word or phrase italicized. Observe:

Matt. 20:28—*Ransom* not paid.

Matt. 26:28—*Remission of sins* not effected.

John 1:29—*Sins of world* not taken away.

John 3:16—*Everlasting life* voided.

John 12:31—"Prince of this world" *not cast out*.

Rom. 3:25—*Propitiation* for our sins not accomplished.

Rom. 5:9—*Justification* through blood not received.

Rom. 5:10—*Reconciliation* not brought about.

Eph. 1:7—*Redemption and forgiveness* nullified.

Col. 1:20—*Peace* through blood abolished.

Col. 1:22—*Holiness and blamelessness* thwarted.

1 Thess. 1:10—*Deliverance from wrath to come* unaccomplished.

Heb. 2:14—*Destruction* of devil's power of death aborted.

Heb. 2:15—*Deliverance* from bondage breaks down.

Heb. 9:26—*Putting away sin* unaccomplished.

Heb. 9:28—*Substitutionary bearing of sin* collapses.

Heb. 10:14—*Perfection of those sanctified* voided.

1 Peter 3:18—*The bringing of us to God* thwarted.

1 John 1:7—*Cleansing from all sin* canceled.

1 John 2:2—*Propitiation for our sins* voided.

Rev. 1:5—*Washing from our sins* abandoned.

Rev. 7:14—*Washing of robes in Lamb's blood* not accomplished.

That is the tremendous, sobering sweep of salvation that would be nullified, aborted, canceled—IF Christ did not die a complete, vicarious, atoning, all-sufficient, once-for-all death on Calvary's cross. That is the gravity of the contention that Christ did not die, but lived on during the fateful "three days." All redemption hinges on His *death*, as well as His resurrection, as His part of the transaction. But He *did* die, and was raised forevermore. Our redemption is assured by the immutable fact of Christ's actually accomplished death, followed by His triumphant resurrection. Hear it:

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:8-11).

IV. Problem Text (2 Peter 2:4)—Fallen Angels Detained in "Tartarus"

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but *cast them down to hell* [*tartarōo*], and delivered them into *chains* [*seirais*, "cord," "rope," "chain"] *of darkness* [*zophou*, "nether darkness," "murkiness"], to be *reserved unto judgment*; and spared not the old [antediluvian] world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a *preacher* of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:4, 5).

Had it not been that *tartarōo*⁵ unfortunately has been rendered by the translators, "cast down to hell," there would be no occasion to allude to this text as having any bearing upon

⁵ *Tartarōo* is the verb form of the noun *tartaros*. "Tartarussed" would be a good English translation of this verb. This compares with the verb "jailed" for "cast into jail."

the doom of wicked men. The background is simply this: The designation *Tartarus* (in Gr. *tartaros*, the noun form of this verb) belongs to Greco-Roman mythology, and occurs only here in Scripture. Although it is a Greek word, it does not appear at all in the Septuagint.

Virgil, however, and Horace, Lucian, Lucretius, Statius, and other pagan Greek poets use it to designate what they understood to be the dark abyss of the infernal regions. Homer describes it as a subterranean region, or prison, into which were cast the Titans, or giants, who rebelled against Zeus. Pluto was supposed to be the reigning deity of those regions, and was called "Father Tartarus."

1. PLACE OF DETENTION FOR FALLEN ANGELS.—*Tartarus*, as here used by Peter, represents the place of temporary confinement of the demons, or wicked angels, until such time as they should be judged and then destroyed. It is to be particularly noted that *Tartarus* in no way relates to the place where the wicked dead (*men*) are at present reserved, which is *hadēs*, or *gravedom*—*she'ôl* in the Hebrew. Nor is it to be confused with Gehenna, where the resurrected wicked will be destroyed *in the future*, in the lake of fire.

These fallen angels were, as a result of their sin and rebellion, cast down from the highest heights of glory to the deepest abyss of darkness—from "ministering spirits" to the ignominious state of restricted prisoners awaiting judgment.

2. NO PUNISHMENT BEFORE DECISIONS OF JUDGMENT.—It is to be noted, however, that neither wicked men nor fallen angels receive their punishment until after determinations of the judgment. So *Tartarus* is here used as a place of detention, not of torment.

The modern notion that *Tartarus* is an apartment of Hades, a sort of underground dungeon of torture, is based solely on heathen fables, without a scintilla of scriptural support. Any attempt to make a pagan out of Peter is based wholly on Greek mythology.

It is regrettable that *she'ól*, *hadēs*, and *gehenna* were alike translated "hell," and *tartarōo* as "cast into hell," when they are by no means synonymous. Such a procedure has only perpetuated and increased the confusion of ideas on the question of future punishment. We repeat: *She'ól* and *hadēs* stand for gravedom, wherein the dead sleep until the last trump, while *gehenna* is the place of final punishment, *after* judgment. We must not borrow our theology from the heathen world.

To assert that these angels, and human sinners as well, are now in a place of burning torment is to charge God with the gross injustice of punishing before judgment. (See 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20:10-14; Dan. 7:22, 26.) *Tartarus*, then, is primarily a place of *detention*—not of torment—for the temporary confinement of evil angels, who are reserved unto judgment and ultimate destruction. It has nought to do with men.

"The Lord knoweth how . . . to *reserve* the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9).

V. John's Epistles: Life in and Through Christ Is Central Thought

As might be expected, the Epistles of John, like his Gospel, are infused with the same sublime theme of *life*. John begins and ends his first epistle with the dominant thought of *eternal life in Christ*—Christ as the fountain, source, and personification of life. The expression "eternal life" appears six times in this one short epistle.

I. LIFE MANIFESTED, PROMISED, POSSESSED IN CHRIST.—
Note this illuminating and progressive series:

(1) "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the *Word of life* [*logou tēs zōēs*, "God Incarnate"]; (for the *life* was manifested ["brought to light"], and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that *eternal life*, which was with the Father, and was *manifested* unto us;)" . . . (1 John 1:1, 2).

The Throng of the Redeemed That No Man Can Number, Before the Throne of God—Saved, Immortalized, and Secure Forever.



(2) "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even *eternal life*" (chap. 2:25).

(3) "We know that we *have passed* from death unto *life* [*zōēn*], because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath *eternal life* [*zōēn aiōnion*] abiding in him" (1 John 3:14).

That is it—manifested, promised, possessed.

2. POSSESSION OF ETERNAL LIFE CONDITIONED ON INDWELLING CHRIST.—The Christian believer, then, has "eternal life" *now*, as a gift of God—but *vested in Christ*, for "this life is *in his Son*" (1 John 5:11; cf. 3:2). Everything turns on this relationship. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (chap. 5:12). The possession of everlasting life, then, is wholly conditioned upon *Christ's abiding in the heart by faith*. He who believes in, and experiences, this indwelling *has* everlasting life, vested in Christ, and has

“passed from death unto life” (1 John 3:14; also John 5:24, 25; 6:54; 8:51). Note the inspired phrasing:

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us *eternal life*, and this *life* is *in his Son*” (1 John 5:11).

“He that hath the Son hath *life* [the life]; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not *life* [the life]” (v. 12).

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye *have eternal life*” (v. 13).

But this is a dual, or reciprocal, relationship:

“We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are *in him* that is true, even in his *Son Jesus Christ*. This is the true God, and *eternal life*” (v. 20).

Stronger, more explicit phrasing could scarcely be framed, nor higher testimony cited. The only way to turn away its force is to deny that *life*—eternal life in Christ—does not really mean life, through giving it a metaphysical twist. But if men attempt to change the intent of such positive testimony to suit their preconceived concepts, then their controversy must be with God, the Author and Inspirer of these lucid statements. Life, *eternal life in Christ*, is the dominant note and burden.

Revelation—Inspiration's Supreme Portrayal of Human Destiny

Of all the disciples, John the Beloved caught the vision of Christ's inner message and reflected the genius and goal of His mission on earth more clearly and fully than all others. His Gospel record of the utterances and emphases of Christ constitutes our supreme source book on the eternal life that He came to bestow. And his epistles are replete with their application. Contrary to popular conception, John actually wrote of *life* as frequently and as fully as of love.¹

But the Apocalypse, penned by John the revelator, constitutes the climax, the ultimate, in divine revelation. In it, all books of the canon "meet and end." It was John who was chosen of God to convey the last New Testament message of God to men, with its supreme entreaty to repentance and *life*, and its final admonition and warning against rejection and *death*—necessary to complete the record of the Book of God, and to round out and close the inspired revelation of truth. Any deviation from or perversion of this perfect norm, or any addition to or subtraction from the terms and specifications of this inspired depiction, is therefore fraught with gravest peril. Its closing words of warning are:

"If any man shall *add unto* these things ["the words of the prophecy of this book"], God shall *add unto him* the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall *take away* from the words of the book of

¹ John used the terms "life" (*zōē*), "give life" (*zōopoieō*), and "live" (*zōō*) a total of 56 times, and used the terms for "love" (*agapē*, *agapōō*, and *phileō*) only 57. So even by count there was as great and constant an emphasis upon *life* as upon *love* in the Gospel of John.



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Christ Reveals the Glories of the Radiant Immortal Life in Store for Those Who Accept the Proffered Gift.

this prophecy, God shall *take away his part* out of the *book of life*, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18, 19).

I. Tremendous Scope and Grand Finale of Book of Revelation

The majestic, towering figure of the book of Revelation is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He fills the Apocalypse from the opening verse to its closing benediction. And in the motif and movement of the book all the events portrayed sweep inexorably onward toward the great consummation—the triumph of God and righteousness, and the immortalization of the righteous at the Second Advent and resurrection, together with the establishment of the everlasting kingdom of Christ. But along with it is placed the grim portrayal of the total destruction of sin and sinners and the complete eradication of the

originator and of the fearful fruitage of sin and death—and which will eventuate in a clean universe forever.

Man has titled this inspired portrayal the "Revelation of St. John the Divine." But the Spirit-inspired title is instead, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1), which it most assuredly is. It is the unveiling, revealing, and presentation of *Jesus* (the Saviour) *Christ* (the Messiah-Priest), and now soon to appear pre-eminently in all His power and glory as *King* of kings and *Lord* of lords, together with the inauguration of His everlasting kingdom.

1. SWEEPS IN PAST, PRESENT, BUT PRIMARILY FUTURE.—

The Apocalypse is a prophetic message. It declares that it deals with three major classes, or divisions, of "*things*": (1) "The *things* which thou [John] hast seen"—the vision of Jesus Christ, His eternal pre-existence, incarnate life, atoning death and triumphant resurrection-life forevermore, and His possession of the "keys of hell [*hadēs*, "the grave"] and of death"—(Rev. 1:10-20); (2) "the *things* which are"—those then existing or now taking place—and (3) "the *things* which shall be hereafter"—up to and through the close of the present world order. That is its tremendous scope and declared emphasis.

2. TRIUMPH OF "SEED" AND CRUSHING OF SERPENT.—

These all-embracing developments are presented in a series of significant *sevens*—seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven prophetic symbols, seven vials, seven dooms, and seven "new" things forevermore. Basically, the Revelation covers the time of the Christian Era (with retrospective glimpses) from John's day to and through the great consummation, and the epochal entrance upon the aeons of *eternity*.

It brings the initial prophecy of the triumph of the "seed" (Gen. 3:15) and the paralleling crushing of the serpent to its predestined close. Genesis (the book of beginnings) and Revelation (the unveiling of the endings of the disclosures of the Written Word) are thus tied together in Christ, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last (Rev. 1:8, 17).

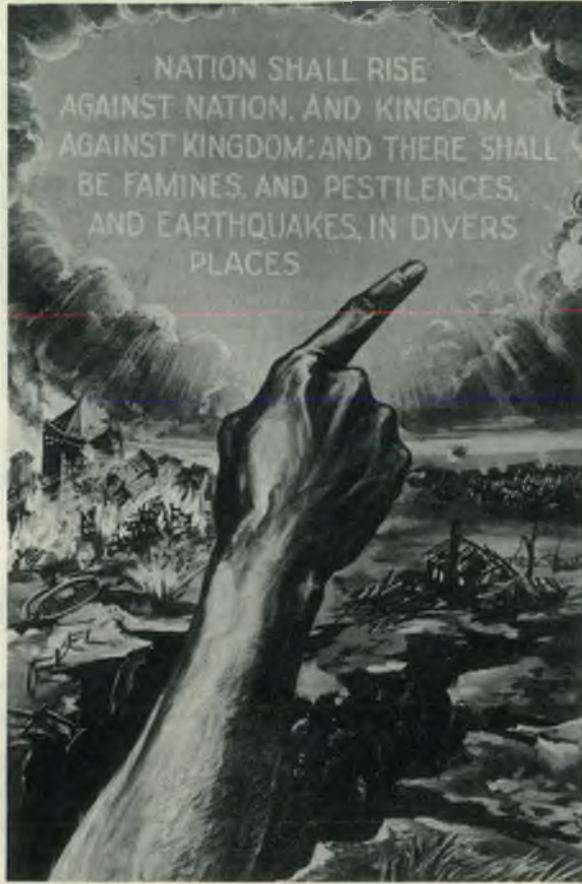
The Revelation is clearly the complement and glorious completion of Genesis. Either book without the other would be wholly incomplete and actually incomprehensible. So the Creation and the Fall of Genesis 1 to 3 find their complete counterpart in the re-creation and restoration of Revelation 20 to 22. Truly, without the opening chapters of Genesis the Revelation would be an insoluble riddle. And likewise, without these closing chapters the conflicts of the chronicles of history would be but a heartbreaking record of the failure of man, the triumph of Satan and sin and death, and the doom of the human race.

But history does not so end. It closes with the glorious triumph of truth and righteousness, and of those who have ranged themselves on the side of God. It is God's message of hope and assurance. It completes the eschatological portrayal of the "last things." There is no more beyond.

In the Old Testament, Christ the King and His kingdom are set forth in promise, symbol, and prophecy. In the Gospels the Messiah-King is presented and proclaimed to men, and rejected. But in the Revelation the King is enthroned amid the acclamations of the redeemed and His everlasting kingdom set up forever. Thus promise and prophecy are completely fulfilled. Types and symbols all give way to glorious antitypical realities that are now established forevermore. The vague eternity of the Old Testament becomes the absolute reality of the New.

3. "DAY OF THE LORD" IS MASTER KEY TO APOCALYPSE.—The term "*day of the Lord*" (Isa. 2:12; Eze. 13:5; 30:3) will be seen to be the key that unlocks the vast meaning and remarkable scope of the Apocalypse, which inspired expression includes "day of vengeance," "day of wrath," and multiple paralleling terms (for example, Isa. 61:2; 63:4). In 1 Thessalonians 5, the apostle Paul shortens the full term "*day of the Lord*" (v. 2) to the terse "*that day*" (v. 4). It is the prophesied day of reckoning, of judgment, of redemption, of retribution, of visitation, of rewards and punishments, of the Advent and the

Present World Conditions
Are Foretold in the New
Testament as Harbingers of
the End of the Age.



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resurrection, and the finishing of the mystery of God and of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:7; 15:51).

The Revelation sets forth the consummation of all the affairs of time. It depicts the successful suppression of the great rebellion, and the vindication of the wisdom, justice, and omnipotence of God. It portrays the end of *time* and ushers in the beginning of *eternity*. It sets forth the end of all ages and dispensations.

Careful scholars claim that in the Revelation there are no fewer than 285 quotations, references, and allusions to the Old Testament, thus showing the inseparable intertwining of the Old Testament and the New. Consequently the book of Revelation is the consummation of all divine revelation.

4. COVERS TRANSITION FROM TIME TO ETERNITY.—While the Apocalypse covers the Christian Era in five great repeating prophetic outlines, each presenting a different angle and aspect, so as adequately to compass the whole, its chief emphasis is on the climactic *last things*. While it points out the waymarks and issues along the highway of the ages, it deals primarily with the great approaching consummation of all things. Each prophecy, like a descriptive timetable of the journey, leads up to and through the “last days,” or “time of the end,” to the Second Advent, the actual “end,” and its attendant events—including the resurrection and immortalization of the righteous at our Lord’s return.

But the Apocalypse goes far beyond the cataclysmic end of the present age at the Second Advent. It introduces the millennial thousand years, which is, in reality, the remarkable *transition period* between the world that now is and the world to come. No other inspired penman portrays it in such fullness or sequence. That was left for John. Here is portrayed the approaching period of the confining of Satan in a vast abysmal world prison house, as it is described.

This leads up to the *third* coming of Christ, at the millennium’s *close*, to raise the *wicked* dead—the “*rest of the dead*,” of Revelation 20:5. Then, after the final, futile, desperate stand of the wicked, the just sentence of God’s judgment is pronounced upon them, and is executed by the raining down upon the incorrigibles the predicted *Gehenna of fire*, to destroy them.²

This compasses the end of Satan and his evil angels, who participated in the great rebellion in Heaven (Rev. 12:7-9), and ever since have been the relentless tempters of men on earth and the instigators of war, sin, sickness, sorrow, suffering, and death, as well as the persistent purveyors of error and deception. These all have their part in the *Gehenna of fire* “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

² Fully covered in L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, volume 4.



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COURTESY OF PACIFIC PRESS PUBLISHING ASSN.

The Assault on the Holy City by the Resurrected Wicked Ends in Their Total Destruction.

But this is not to be accomplished until Satan makes his final effort to rally the multitudes of the resurrected wicked of the ages in a final but futile attempt to overwhelm the saints and wrest the kingdom of God from them, and to establish himself instead, as malign dictator. But it all ends in the ultimate and utter overthrow of Satan, the evil angels, and incorrigibly wicked men forevermore. Ultimately they will all be burned up, destroyed, brought to nought, become ashes. The fires of destruction will do their fateful work.

5. COMPLETE VINDICATION OF GOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.—And after the fires have done their cleansing work, God will create new heavens and a new earth, wherein the immortalized saints will dwell forevermore in Paradise restored. That is the transcendent promise of the Apocalypse. And that, in a nutshell, is the divine plan of salvation, the divine plan of the ages. That is the consummation of God's great outline of time and eternity.

Man has long had his day of rejection of God and righteousness. Now the great *day of the Lord*, as it is constantly termed, brings the end of all rebellion and the establishment of righteousness forevermore. It is marked by the triumph of God and the vindication of His justice, wisdom, grace, and love—and the bestowal of eternal life and Immortality upon man forevermore. It is *God's day*. That is the essence of the book of Revelation that we will now examine.

II. "Day of the Lord"—God's Great Day of Reckoning With Man

As intimated, the key that unlocks the understanding of the book of Revelation is to be found back in Isaiah:

"For the *day of the Lord* of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low" (Isa. 2:12).

This may properly be referred to as the *inception*, because it is the first of twenty Old Testament occurrences of this epochal expression, "*day of the Lord*." In fourteen instances³ it is simply *yóm Yahweh*. In four (Isa. 2:12; Eze. 30:3; Zech. 14:1, 7) it appears with the *Lamed* prefix "for" or "to," that is, a day known to Jehovah. In all other places it is combined with such momentous words as "wrath" and "vengeance," the inescapable accompaniments of *the day*.

In the New Testament the same significant term occurs four times (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10, 12). The "*day of the Lord*" is the "day" when sinful man will be judged and abased, and Jehovah exalted.

This is now "*man's day*," when *man* exalts himself and attempts to crowd God out of the control of the very world He has created. The *Lord's* "day," or "*day of the Lord*," will bring the great reversal—when man shall be "brought low," and the just and righteous sovereignty of God established forevermore.

In order to grasp the far-reaching implications and significance of this tremendous time of reversal—of rectification of all inequities and of justification of God and His punishment of sin and sin's proponents, both demonic and human—we must follow the development of this tremendous motif throughout the Book of God. This involves the consecutive tracing of the pertinent passages across the pages of Holy Writ.

³ The fourteen occurrences are here recorded for reference: Isa. 13:6, 9; Eze. 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 15; Zeph. 1:7, 14 (2); Mal. 4:5.

III. OT Texts and Terms Portraying "Day of the Lord"

Without injecting diverting comment we first present the remaining texts of the striking Old Testament witness in the sheer words of Scripture, that they may speak cumulatively for themselves, with key words or phrases emphasized—the term in capitals and small capitals and the description in italics.

Isa. 10:3—"What will ye do in the DAY OF VISITATION, and in the *desolation which shall come from far?*"

Isa. 13:6—"Howl ye; for the DAY OF THE LORD is at hand; *it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*"

Isa. 13:9-13—"Behold, the DAY OF THE LORD cometh, cruel both *with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. . . . I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the DAY OF HIS FIERCE ANGER.*"

Joel 1:15—"Alas for THE DAY! for the DAY OF THE LORD is at hand, and as a *destruction from the Almighty shall it come.*"

Joel 2:1—"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: *let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the DAY OF THE LORD cometh.*"

Joel 2:11—"For the DAY OF THE LORD is *great and very terrible; and who can abide it?*"

Joel 2:31—"The *sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD come.*"

Amos 5:18—"Woe unto you that desire the DAY OF THE LORD! to what end is it for you? the DAY OF THE LORD is *darkness, and not light*" (also v. 20).

Zeph. 1:7—"Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the DAY OF THE LORD is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests."

Zeph. 1:14, 15—"The GREAT DAY OF THE LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly. . . . That day is a *day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess.*"

Zech. 14:1-7—"Behold, the DAY OF THE LORD cometh. . . . Then shall the Lord go forth. . . . And *his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives. . . . And the Lord my God shall come, and all the*



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The Redeemed Saints in the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, Safe With Their Saviour Forever.

saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in **THAT DAY**, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but *it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord.*"

Mal. 3:2—"Who may abide the **DAY OF HIS COMING?** and *who shall stand when he appeareth?*"

Mal. 4:5—"Behold, *I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY of the Lord.*"

SUMMARIZING: The "DAY OF THE LORD" will be a day of retribution, of humbling, of punishment, of destruction, of desolation, and of terror, with celestial phenomena as precursors twice mentioned; a day of the shaking of the heavens, of the removal of the earth, of darkness and wasteness, of the coming of God, of heart searching, of separation of the righteous from the wicked, and of the reward of the righteous. And it will be preceded by the coming of symbolic "Elijah the prophet." Such is the multiple *Old Testament* description. It is a tremendous panorama of the day of God's reckoning with defiant man. Its intent cannot be escaped.

IV. NT Portrayal of Day of the Lord Jesus Christ

Next follow through, in the same way, the amazing witness of the New Testament testimony, likewise italicizing the key descriptive phrases:

Matt. 7:22—"Many will say to me in THAT DAY [when the saints shall "enter into the kingdom of heaven"], Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? . . . And then will I profess unto them [the hypocrites], *I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"

Acts 2:20, 21—"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that GREAT AND NOTABLE DAY OF THE LORD come: and it shall come to pass, that *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"

Rom. 2:5-7—"Wrath against the DAY OF WRATH and *revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.*"

1 Cor. 1:7, 8—"Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: . . . that ye may be *blameless* in the DAY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

1 Cor. 5:5—"May be *saved* in the DAY OF THE LORD JESUS."

2 Cor. 1:14—"Our's in the DAY OF THE LORD JESUS."

Phil. 1:6—"Will perform it until the DAY OF JESUS CHRIST."

Phil. 1:10—"That ye may be *sincere* and *without offence* till the DAY OF CHRIST."

Phil. 2:16—"That I may rejoice in the DAY OF CHRIST, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

1 Thess 5:2—"For yourselves know perfectly that the DAY OF THE LORD so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then *sudden destruction cometh upon them*, . . . and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that THAT DAY should overtake you as a thief."

2 Thess. 2:1, 2—"We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that ye be not soon shaken in mind, . . . as that the DAY OF CHRIST is at hand [in their generation, as the "falling away" must come first, whom the Lord will "*destroy*" at "*his coming*"]."

2 Peter 3:10—"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*."

2 Peter 3:11, 12—"Seeing then that *all these things shall be dissolved*, what manner of persons ought ye to be . . . looking for and hasting unto [from *speudō*, "hastening"] the coming of the DAY OF GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be *dissolved*, and the *elements shall melt with fervent heat?*"

Rev. 1:10—Some scholars would add, "I was in the Spirit on the LORD'S DAY [*hē kuriakē hēmera*]," or "DAY OF THE LORD." Compare Isaiah 2:2 where the Hebrew terms are equivalent to the Greek *hē kuriakē hēmera*.

AGAIN SUMMARIZING: Celestial signs appear as harbingers of the Second Advent, then wrath, judgment, retribution, surprise, destruction for the wicked, heaven and earth dissolved in physical cataclysms, but with immortality and reward for the righteous. What a portrayal! The *day of the Lord* is clearly the climax, the grand finale of all things terrestrial, when God takes charge of the affairs at the great consummation.

V. "Day of the Lord"—Fulfills in Historical Actualities of Apocalypse

We will restate briefly the over-all prophetic portrayal of the *day of the Lord*, of the Old and New Testaments, and then proceed to note the identity of the terms of fulfillment majestically spread before us in the Apocalypse that seals off the Book of God, and its parting message to mankind. Then we will note certain supplemental variant phraseology, which now appears in the detailed application in the Revelation recital, which enforces and establishes the fundamental truth that had

been cumulatively unfolded over the centuries. Observe particularly the additional features.

1. NEW NOTE HAS INCREASING VOLUME AND TEMPO.—Beginning with the eighth-century B.C. prophet Isaiah, a new note was introduced, and a new term (with its variants) was injected into Holy Writ. This motif persisted and grew in significance throughout the remainder of the Old Testament canon, and swept on through the New Testament with increasing volume and tempo. In the Old Testament, it was employed by Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Malachi. And in the New Testament it was enforced and amplified by Jesus, Peter, Paul, and John.

That momentous term was the *day of the Lord*, and its cognate expressions. God was beginning to prepare mankind for the great day of reckoning, the mighty consummation, and God's determinate settlement of the sin problem that had plagued the race and given boldness to the enemies of God.

Back in chapter eight of the Old Testament discussion, mention was made of eight similar terms of increasing intensity—"The day," "latter day," "day of the Lord," "day of his coming," "great day of the Lord," "great and terrible day of the Lord," "great and dreadful day of the Lord," and "day of the Lord's wrath." But its climax was also called the "*end*," to be preceded by the "time of the end," or "*latter days*."

As we have seen, it is variously depicted as a day of wrath, anger, vengeance, trouble, distress, destruction, wasteness, desolation, darkness, gloominess, trumpet, alarm, trouble, terror, and dread—for the *wicked*. It forms a swelling crescendo of developments climaxing with the "end of the world," or age—and consequent developments—comprehended in the one all-inclusive term, "*day of the Lord*."

And in the New Testament it is similarly called a day of wrath, judgment, and harvest for the *wicked*, but of recompense, reward, and eternal life and habitations for the *saints*. But the dominant note is retribution, punishment, perdition, and judgments, terminating with total destruction of sin and

sinners, and especially of Satan and his minions, then followed by a clean universe forevermore.

2. DETAILED BILL OF PARTICULARS IN APOCALYPSE.—As the day of the Lord is prophetically pictured in the Apocalypse, other intensified terms are employed in the portrayal: Torment, sorrow, wrath poured out without mixture, and tormented with fire and brimstone. Specifically, spread over the various prophecies of the Revelation, the day of the Lord is declared to include the time of reaping (Rev. 14:15, 16), of crushing in the wine press of the wrath of God (v. 19), of judgment made manifest (15:4), of the pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God (16:1), of the consummating fiat, "It is done" (16:17), of judgment (17:1), of going into perdition (vs. 8, 11), of burning with fire (v. 16; 18:9, 10), of torment and sorrow (v. 7), of weeping and wailing (v. 15), and of the smoke of burning (v. 18).

It is the time when iniquity is thrown down and found no more at all (18:21), of further allusion to the smoke of her torment (19:3), of righteous judgment and making war on iniquity (v. 11), of smiting the nations (v. 15), of treading the wine press of the wrath of "Almighty God" (v. 15), of casting alive into lake of fire burning with brimstone (v. 20), of slaying with the sword (v. 21). And finally fire comes down from God out of Heaven and *devours* them (20:9), and they are tormented "*day and night*" (v. 10). It is the execution of a just judgment, for they have been judged out of the infallible record of the books of Heaven.

"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" (Rev. 20:12).

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (v. 15).

3. "OLD" PASSES FOREVER; "NEW" ESTABLISHED FOREVER.—Such is the galaxy of terms and descriptions necessary to portray the actual *day of the Lord* and God's righteous disposal

Holy Angels—Special Order
of Celestial Beings Dwelling
in the Presence of God and
Constituting His Messengers
—Are Major Actors in the
Plan of Salvation.



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of the sin problem. Then comes the “new heaven and a new earth,” the former having passed away forever (Rev. 21:1). Thenceforth there is forever no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, and no more curse, “*for the former things are passed away*” (v. 4). “Behold, I make all things new” (v. 5).

And the two—the new earth, and the utter passing of the present earth, and its sin, sorrow, injustice, and rebellion—were both predicted in Isaiah 65:17, by the very prophet who initiated the term and launched the intent of the *day of the Lord*. Such is the profound unity of the Old and New Testaments. They both had one inspired Author, impelling the inspired penmen—the prophets and the apostles. And this is a prime exhibit.

4. CONSUMMATING TESTIMONY SEALS AGE-OLD WITNESS.—

Another feature must be stressed ere this section is closed. It is this: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27).

Satan, the original rebel and ruthless deceiver and father of lies, will not be there—having then been totally destroyed—and his catastrophic lie in Eden will have been utterly discredited, disproved, and brought to an end. Sin, with its lethal train of woe, will not rise up again. In the "second death" all sinners will have utterly perished and passed from being—thus disproving Satan's lying claim announced in Eden, "Ye [our first parents, and all mankind] shall *not* surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Six thousand years of unremitting death confute it.

So the saved all know by actual experience the verity of God's word and the falsehood and fraud and deception of Satan's first lie. They have seen its falsehood fulfilled before their eyes. The controversy is thus ended. The *day of the Lord* is over, fulfilled, past. The truth of God as to the nature and destiny of man is vindicated and established forever. The cruel experiment of sin is ended.

That is the triumph of God in the *day of the Lord*. A sinless universe and a redeemed humanity will then have entered upon the aeons of eternity. That is the primary message of God's last book of the canon—the Revelation. And it is in complete harmony with the over-all witness of all the inspired messages across the centuries that preceded it.

Apocalypse Reveals Final Fate of Wicked

I. Teaching of the Apocalypse on Final Punishment

As we have seen, the Apocalypse is pre-eminently a book of *life* and *death*. As to the LIFE phase, we find the tree of *life* (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14), the book of *life* (20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19), the river of water of *life* (22:1, 2), the crown of *life* (2:10; 3:11), and the water of *life* (21:6; 22:17). All of these are for the recipients of eternal life.

As to the DEATH (*thanatos*) aspect we find the "second death" four times portrayed, and defined as death in and through the "lake of fire" (2:11; 20:14, 15; 21:8). It is also termed "killing with death" (*apokteinō*, "to kill outright," "to slay," "to put an end to"); "destruction" (from *diaphtheirō*, "decay wholly," "perish"—11:18); and being "devoured" (*katēsthiō*, "denoting utter excision"—20:9). These terms are always used in the sense of bringing to an utter end. As twice intimated in the Old Testament, the wicked will then "sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts" (Jer. 51:57). There is identity of punishment in both Testaments.

Observe first that the universal "first" death, with its accompanying *hadēs* (gravedom), is cast into and swallowed up by the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8). Then Satan, the keeper of gravedom, which is the stated "house of his prisoners" (Isa. 14:17), is at last consigned to the same fiery fate. But this all

indicates, not endless continuance in misery, but the actual ending of existence itself.

II. Gehenna "Lake of Fire" Totally Destroys All Sinners

1. "SECOND DEATH" TIED IN WITH "DAY OF WRATH."—The Apocalypse gives the ultimate word on the final destiny of both righteous and wicked. While some of the Apocalyptic symbols are difficult and mysterious, the Apocalyptic teachings on the destiny of man are not in that category. And it is to be observed that this is the message of Jesus, the "first and the last: . . . he that liveth, and was dead," and is now "alive for evermore." He, as the Life-giver, has the "keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17, 18). Here "life" and "death" are obviously used in their natural and normal sense. Here is found Inspiration's final word thereon.

From first to last the Revelation rings with the dominant note of *life*. But also heard throughout are the somber undertones of *death*—both the universal *first* death of sleep for all and the inescapable *second* death of total destruction, restricted exclusively to the wicked. First note its tie-in with the *day of God's wrath*, alternative for the *day of the Lord*:

"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the *second* death" (Rev. 2:11).

"And the heaven departed as a scroll. . . . And the kings of the earth [and great, rich, chief, mighty, bond, and free], . . . hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the *wrath of the Lamb*: for the *great day of his wrath*¹ is come" (Rev. 6:14-17).

"And *thy wrath* is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be *judged*, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants . . . and shouldst *destroy* [from *diaphtheirō*, "to cause to wholly perish"] them which destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18).

¹ It may be well to note two other "wrath" texts: (1) The "wrath" of the devil, "for the devil is come down unto you, having great *wrath*, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time"—Rev. 12:12; and "the great dragon . . . , that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (v. 9); who was "wroth with the woman [the church]" (v. 17); and (2) the "wrath" of Babylon, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen . . . because she made all nations drink of the wine of the *wrath* of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8). So there are three wraths—of God, Satan, and Babylon—all actual, and all in fundamental conflict.

2. "LAKE OF FIRE" EQUATED WITH "SECOND DEATH."—In chapter 14 the drinking of the "wine of the *wrath of God*" involves being "tormented with *fire and brimstone*," with the "smoke of their torment" ascending "up for ever and ever," and having "no rest day nor night" for a special designated class (Rev. 14:9-11). Chapter 17:8 depicts the going of the "beast" into "*perdition*" (*apōleia*, "destruction," "ruin"), which declaration is repeated in verse 11.

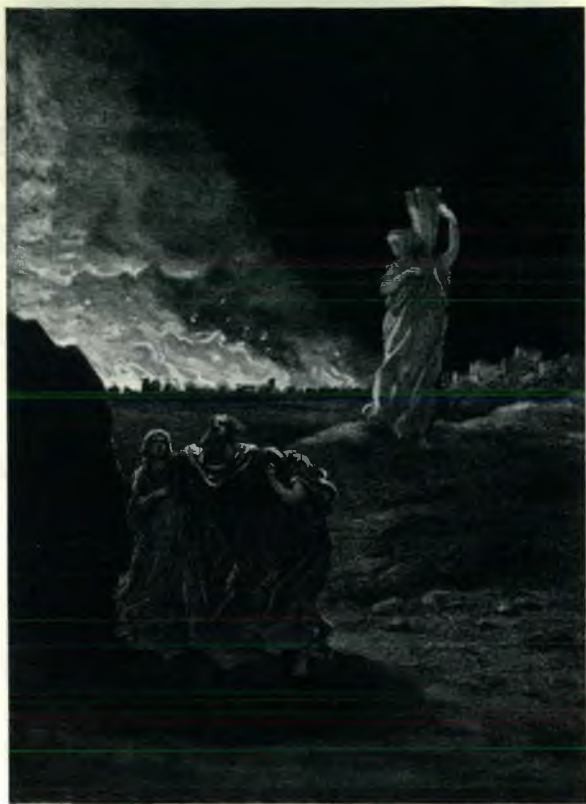
Chapter 19 describes the judging of the symbolic harlot, and her "smoke" going up forever (Rev. 19:2, 3), the casting of the "beast" and the "false prophet," and their special followers, into the "lake of fire burning with brimstone" (v. 20). Chapter 20 describes the casting of the devil into this seething "lake of fire and brimstone," where he, too, is "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (v. 10). Then follows the declaration:

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and *hell* [*hadēs*, "the grave"] delivered up the dead which were in them. . . . And death and *hell* [*hadēs*, gravedom] 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*" (vs. 13-15).

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: *which is the second death*" (Rev. 21:8).

That is the total testimony of the Apocalypse on the "lake of fire" and the final destruction therein. And it is this cluster of texts that furnishes the supporting weight of evidence cited by proponents of the endless torment theory. It is therefore incumbent upon us to examine those expressions upon which such reliance is placed. We here assemble them for convenient reference.

3. "LAKE OF FIRE" IS PREDICTED "GEHENNA OF FIRE."—That the "lake of fire" of the Apocalypse is simply the "*hell* [*gehenna*] fire" (occasionally "outer darkness," as indicated by an asterisk [*]) of the rest of the New Testament, and still future, into which the wicked, including Satan, are to be cast



G. DORÉ, ARTIST

The Peril of Looking Back
and the Destruction of
Sodom—Symbol of the Final
Excision of Sinners.

at the end of the age, will be apparent from running the eye down over the expressions in italics and small capitals in the texts that follow:

Matt. 5:30—"That thy whole body should be *cast into hell [gehenna].*"

Matt. 8:12—"Be *cast out into outer DARKNESS: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

Matt. 10:28—"Fear him which is able to *destroy both soul and body in HELL [gehenna].*"

Matt. 13:41, 42—"Gather out of his kingdom all . . . which do iniquity; and shall *cast them into a FURNACE of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

Matt. 18:8—"Rather than . . . to be *cast into EVERLASTING FIRE [pur to aiōnion].*"

Matt. 18:9—"To be *cast into hell fire [tēn geennan tou puros, "fire of Gehenna"].*"

Matt. 22:13—"Cast him into *OUTER DARKNESS; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

Matt. 25:30—"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into *OUTER DARKNESS: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

Matt. 25:41—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into EVERLASTING FIRE, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Matt. 25:46—"These shall GO AWAY into EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT."

Mark 9:43—"To go into HELL [*gehenna*], into the FIRE THAT NEVER SHALL BE QUENCHED [*to pur to asbeston*, with no hope of escape]."

Luke 3:17—"The chaff he will burn with FIRE UNQUENCHABLE."

2 Thess. 1:9—"Shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION [*olethron aiōnion*, age lasting] from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

2 Peter 2:4—"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [*tartarōo*], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be RESERVED UNTO JUDGMENT."

Jude 6—"The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [Heaven], he hath RESERVED in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day [of the Lord]."

Rev. 2:11—"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Rev. 14:10—"He shall be tormented with FIRE AND BRIMSTONE."

Rev. 19:11-15—The "Faithful and True" rides forth to "judge and make war," His eyes as a "flame of fire," on His head "many crowns"; His name "The Word of God." He smites the nations and treads the "winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." On His vesture is the name "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Rev. 20:6—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the SECOND DEATH hath no power."

Rev. 20:10—"The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone."

Rev. 20:15—"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the LAKE OF FIRE."

Rev. 21:8—"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the SECOND DEATH."

4. CONSTITUTES INEXORABLE CHAIN OF EVIDENCE.—*Now just observe:* Here are twenty-two references—seven of them in the Apocalypse—dealing with this one theme. Here is the complete round of equivalent, or contingent, terms: *Gehenna, fire, furnace of fire, everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, Gehenna fire, everlasting destruction, lake of fire burning with brimstone, second death, reserved unto the judgment of the GREAT DAY, lake of fire and brimstone, lake of fire*—and finally, the comprehensive "*lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death*" (Rev. 21:8).

The *fire of Gehenna*, portrayed by Christ, was then *future*. It was to be preceded by the judgment. It was part of the operation of the GREAT DAY OF GOD. It was destruction by fire. It was the lake of fire, or fire and brimstone. And to round out the inexorable sequence, this lake, burning with fire and brimstone, is the SECOND DEATH (v. 8). And the fires, having then done their destined work, burn out. And those destroyed thereby are no more, as elsewhere portrayed.

The lake of fire thus involves and results in the second death. This is in exact accord with Christ's declaration that God can, and will, "*destroy* [*apollumi*, "destroy utterly," "kill," "cause to perish," "come to an end"] both soul and body in *hell* [*gehenna*]" (Matt. 10:28). That is the evidence of the Apocalypse on the final doom, or destruction, of the wicked.

III. Problem Text (Rev. 14:11)—Torment Day and Night; Smoke Ascending Forever

1. TERMS OF REVELATION 14:11 LIMITED TO SPECIFIED GROUP.—Various terms in the Apocalypse are figurative or symbolical—such as the "smoke" of Revelation 14:11. "*Smoke*" has aptly been said to be the formless relic of an object that has been consumed, or decomposed, by the action of fire. It is but a relic, a vestige, an emblem, a lingering trace of the passing, the drifting aftermath that remains from *an object that has been destroyed*. A *perpetual* smoke may, therefore, well stand for a perpetual reminder before the universe of an irreparable ruin that has taken place, a burning up that has accomplished its allotted purpose.

The same inspired portrayal, it is to be ever remembered, declares that God will "consume," "devour," "destroy," cause to "perish," and "blot out" all the wicked. That dread transaction, or operation, involves and constitutes the "second death." The perpetuity intended is not, therefore, of the *torment*, but of the death following thereafter and caused thereby.

And as to the "torment" of Revelation 14:11, the renowned Greek specialist and translator, Dr. R. F. Weymouth, truly says: "There is nothing in this verse that necessarily implies an eternity of suffering." And he adds that it "gives in itself no indication of time. Cp. Gen. xix, 28; Jude 7."

It is further important to remember that in Revelation 20:15 and 21:8, where *all* the lost are involved, *no period of duration is mentioned or specified*. There is no indication that the "fire" depicted does not perform its normal and designated function of extirpating destruction, then ultimately and utterly going out—for in the new earth there will be no more pain, tears, anguish, or death (Rev. 20:14; 21:4; 22:3). These will all have "passed away" (chap. 21:4). And that agrees precisely with the terms of Romans 6:23—that "the wages of sin is *death*."

2. SMOKE ASCENDS UP FOREVER—FIRES BURNED OUT.—As to the intent of the figure of "smoke" *ascending up "for ever and ever,"* other scriptures must be allowed to interpret and explain this expressly recorded term. Just such an explicit definition appears, for example, in Isaiah 34:

"And the streams thereof [of Idumea, or Edom—v. 6] shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; *the smoke thereof shall go up for ever* [Heb., *lenešach nešachim*, "perpetuity of perpetuities"] (vs. 9, 10)."

Then follows immediately the conjoined explanatory clause:

"From generation to generation *it shall lie waste*; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the *stones of emptiness*" (vs. 10, 11).

That definitely indicates perpetual desolation, not an endless life of pain. The fires have burned out. If, therefore, the place that was once a raging fire came, in due time, to "lie

^a Richard F. Weymouth, *The New Testament in Modern Speech* (3d ed.), Rev. 14:11, n. 7, p. 715.

waste," while the smoke drifted endlessly on, as a reminder, back in Isaiah's time, the same would be true of the smoke from the fires of *gehenna* when they will have accomplished their designated work in the *great day of the Lord*.

3. NEITHER "TORMENT" NOR "SMOKE" ARE ETERNAL.—Of the expressions appearing in Revelation 14:10, 11—(1) "tormented" with fire and brimstone," (2) the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," and (3) "they have no rest day nor night"—it must again be remembered that these specifications all refer to the punishment of a special class, whose guilt is exceptional. On them, in this retributive "day of the Lord," the "wrath of God" is "poured out without mixture" (v. 10). Their punishment is therefore exceptionally severe.

Nevertheless, even with that understanding the passage does *not* say that their *torment* is to continue forever; rather, it is the "smoke" of their time of "torment" that drifts on endlessly.

The psalmist wrote, "The wicked . . . shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away" (Ps. 37:20). The smoke could never be regathered and reorganized, so as to form the continuing individual personality again. This is evident from the fact that the same expression is used concerning mystical "Babylon" (an ecclesiastical *organization*, not an individual), whose smoke likewise "rose up for ever and ever" (Rev. 19:3), elsewhere referred to as "smoke of her burning" (Rev. 18:18).

But neither is this endless burning, for her doom is elsewhere set forth as *utter obliteration*—Babylon shall with "violence" be "thrown down, and shall be found no more at

³ Several occurrences of the term "torment" (*basanos*), or "tormented" (*basanizō*, literally, "to test," as with metals by a touchstone, or "to torture"), appear in the Apocalypse. These are:

Rev. 9:5—"tormented [from *basanizō*, "test, prove, torture"] five months"

11:10—"tormented them that dwell on the earth"

12:2—symbolic woman "pained [lit., "tormented"] to be delivered"

14:10—"tormented with fire and brimstone"

14:11—"smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever"

18:7—"so much torment and sorrow give her"

20:10—"tormented [from *basanizō*] day and night for ever and ever"

There will assuredly be torment, but not endless torment. It ultimately ends when the destined utter extinction of being has taken place.

all" (v. 21). She shall be "utterly burned with fire" (v. 8). Consequently she does not live on and suffer on endlessly, but ultimately ceases to be. Now, inasmuch as Babylon is to be obliterated, and yet her smoke said to continue to rise, it is plain that her "smoke" obviously represents a *perpetual attestation or reminder of her burning*.

4. "FATHER" OF FIRST "NO-DEATH" LIE LAST TO DIE IN GEHENNA.—Among the closing prophetic declarations of the Apocalypse is the significant affirmation that "all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the *second death*" (Rev. 21:8).

Satan, the deceiving and malignant source of the original Edenic "no-death" lie (John 8:44; cf. Gen. 3:4),⁴ is himself destroyed forever in this very *fire of Gehenna* "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). Thus his own lie is completely disproved by his own death, and brings his age-old deceptions and tragically accepted perversions to an utter end. Here is the fateful declaration: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." "This is the *second death*" (Rev. 20:10, 14).

Thus he *dies*, and dies forever. There is no resuscitation for Satan.

Hence the *first lie* will be completely canceled out by the extirpation of all liars and lying in the terminating "lake of fire." The introduction of the fateful *first death* is counterbalanced by the destruction and cessation of all death and dying in the "*second death*." And all sorrow, pain, sickness, and misery, and finally the grave (all comprehended in that one original word "death") are nullified forever by the obliteration of Satan and all that is evil.

So, with Satan's destruction the *great day of the Lord* comes to its end. The great challenge and rebellion are over. Truth is triumphant forever, and God and His righteousness and equity

⁴ The falsity of Satan's claim ("Ye shall *not* surely die"), as pertains to Adam, is recorded by inspiration—"All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: *and he died*" (Gen. 5:5). So the inspired Old Testament record attests that the serpent lied as to Adam—as well as perpetrating and perpetuating his deceit upon Adam's posterity.



G. DAVIS, ARTIST

Our Accountability Is Not Only for Our Talents but for Our Decisions on the Issues of Life.

are vindicated before all for all eternity. All falsehood, error, and deception have been unmasked and overthrown. God's word and wisdom, His power and justice, His grace and mercy, His government and law, omniscience and sovereignty, are now established beyond all challenge—and that forevermore! The new heaven and new earth follow, and abide forevermore.

IV. No Eternally Seething "Lake of Fire" in Coming "New Earth"

1. DOGMA OF ETERNAL TORMENT INVOLVES NOTORIOUS DUALISM.—Let us frankly face this point: The Immortal-Soulist postulate of the eternity of sin would necessitate (1) the creation or conditioning of special bodies for the wicked, upon their resurrection, in order that they might suffer forever; (2) the redeemed would always behold the agonies of the damned; (3) there would be an eternal activity in death, and

(4) this would involve an inescapable denial of the finished work of Christ. These are all in conflict with the Word. More than that, such a concept involves evil coexisting eternally with good, and Satan coexisting eternally with God—which, in actuality, is simply the ancient Dualism perpetuated.

According to such a thesis, sin and Satan, pain and the curse, sinners and death, will last as long as God exists and is God. But the Apocalypse denies and excludes any such pagan concept, derived as it was from Persian Zoroastrianism, and transmitted therefrom. How could an "eternal evil" coexist forever with the Absolute God, "who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:15, 16)? These are wholly incompatible concepts.

The lake of fire will not seethe alongside the New Jerusalem throughout all eternity. There will be no endlessly burning, perpetually torturing lake of Gehenna fire. The tree of life will not be rooted in the searing sands on the shore line of the lake of fire and brimstone. The flames of the lake of fire will in time die out, just as did the unquenchable fires of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of Idumea of old, when they have accomplished their destined mission of complete destruction of wicked men, evil angels, and Satan the root and source of all evil.

2. CELESTIAL CONFLICT TERMINATES ON EARTH.—It should also be noted that the real existence and fearful activity of evil spirits, or fallen angels, has been an integral and inseparable factor in the great controversy between God and Satan, as well as between good men and evil. Behind the earthly struggle lies the original universe-shaking rebellion (Rev. 12: 7-12), in which angelic principalities and powers are in relentless revolt against divine truth and heavenly authority, including the law and government of God. It was into this dread conflict that earth was tragically drawn in the days of Eden (Gen. 1-3).

However, that celestial conflict is to come to a climax and be crushed forever on this very earth, where Satan will be confined during the thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). Indeed, the un-

precedented attack of Revelation 20:7-10, at the close of the thousand years, is the last battle in the age-old warfare that has racked the universe. We repeat that, according to Holy Writ, *this very earth will be the battleground of the last fearful contest, and then of the final suppression of the great rebel*, following the resurgence of his forces at the close of the millennial thousand years.

So the Bible history of man, and of man's redemption, is inextricably bound up with the chronicling of the infernal activities of these demonic enemies of God and man, knowledge of whose temporary victory but final defeat is imperative to the right understanding of the role of death and destruction in the conflict of the ages, and of Satan's final frenzy, as well as of the bestowal of immortality upon the glorified saints, prior to the close of the great controversy.

3. NEW EARTH AND NEW JERUSALEM GLORIOUSLY REAL.—As the heavens and the earth "which are now," are real, so, after the tremendous transition period of the *day of the Lord*—with its millennial events that will likewise be real—so will the new earth and the New Jerusalem be real (2 Peter 3:5-13). And at the close of the retributive "*day of the Lord*" God then becomes the prophesied God of the whole earth (2 Peter 3:10, 12, 13). The tragic experiment of sin will be over forever. It is that wondrous time twice prophesied of by Isaiah, the prophet, and now confirmed and elaborated by the seer of Patmos. Here are Isaiah's forecasts:

"For, behold, I *create* new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall *remain* before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name *remain*" (chap. 66:22).

The foundations of the New Jerusalem are planted eternally upon this very earth, renewed and restored, and destined to continue forevermore. And the tree of life and the river of life, as portrayed in Revelation 21 and 22, are real. This depiction is not mere poetic imagery.

The tree of life, removed from the original Paradise of Genesis, is here restored to the whole earth. And man, banished from the presence of God, now dwells in the presence of the "God of the whole earth" (Isa. 54:5), who will dwell with men and be their God. We would stress the fact that this is not merely beautiful symbolic imagery—but actual, glorified conditions, re-established when God's eternal, original purpose concerning Heaven and earth is consummated.

Hear it: "No more curse!" (Rev. 22:3). In place of the Fall, the restoration. In place of expulsion—"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" in his sinful condition (Gen. 3:22)—the gracious invitation to those who now "*have right* to the tree of life" (Rev. 22:14), "Come. . . . Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (v. 17).

Transitory existence in this present world gives place to those blessed "everlasting habitations" (Luke 16:9) alluded to by Christ. Death, and the death principle, are effaced. Endless life forevermore is established. Just punishment upon all sinners is past and ended. God and righteousness reign forevermore. And the redeemed abide forever with Him in a clean universe. They have now become "unassailable" by death, for death itself is destroyed—the "last enemy" having been *destroyed*, abolished forevermore (1 Cor. 15:26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 20:14; 21:4). Satan himself, its instigator, is *destroyed* (Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:10)—being reduced to "ashes" (Eze. 28:18, 19).

Yes, it is a clean universe. The divine purpose of Eden is now carried out, more wonderfully than ever. God made this earth to be inhabited by a race of holy, happy beings. And now the glories foretold by the prophets and the apostles of old have met their complete fulfillment. The majesty and grandeur of the eternal scenes baffle and defy all adequate description.

4. ENDLESS LIFE IN CHRIST UNDEVIATING NOTE OF APOCALYPSE.—Let us close this survey of the Apocalypse with this

positive note: The vast company from among the descendants of Adam—a mighty host which “no man could number” (Rev. 7:9), whose names were “written in the Lamb’s *book of life*”—are now clothed forever in the spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness. They now walk the golden streets of Paradise restored, with fadeless *crowns of life* (Rev. 2:10), praising the “*Prince of life*” (Acts 3:15), who redeemed them with His own precious blood, which symbolized His Life. Here they again have a “right to the *tree of life*,” and drink freely forever of the inexhaustible *water of life* in the Paradise of *endless life*. And “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7:17).

In closing let the eye run down the following italicized “life” texts of the book of the Revelation, that their cumulative force may be sensed. These have been sustaining promises, now fulfilled as glorious realities. See how this is the undeviating theme of God’s last book of the canon—the record of the triumph of God in the fateful *day of the Lord*. The redeemed now inherit the promises—

Rev. 2:7—“Give to eat of the *tree of life*.”

Rev. 2:10—“Give thee a *crown of life*.”

Rev. 3:5—“Not blot out his name out of the *book of life*.”

Rev. 11:11—“The *spirit of life* from God entered into them.”

Rev. 13:8—“Whose names are *not* written in the *book of life of the Lamb* slain from the foundation of the world.”

Rev. 17:8—“Whose names were *not* written in the *book of life* from the foundation of the world.”

Rev. 20:12—“Another book was opened, which is the *book of life*.”

Rev. 20:15—“Whosoever was *not* found written in the *book of life* was cast into the lake of fire.”

Rev. 21:6—“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the *water of life* freely.”

Rev. 21:27—“They which are written in the *Lamb’s book of life*.”

Rev. 22:1—“A pure river of *water of life*, clear as crystal.”

Rev. 22:2—“The *tree of life*, which bare twelve manner of fruits.”

Rev. 22:14—“That they may have right to the *tree of life*.”

Rev. 22:17—“Let him take the *water of life* freely.”

Rev. 22:19—“God shall take away his [the tamperer with the truths of God’s Word] part out of the *book of life*, and out of the holy city.”

Thus fifteen times in this last book of Holy Writ, *life* is stressed as the supreme gift of God, bestowed by the Lord of life upon the righteous recipients of endless life, as an inseparable part of God's matchless provisions of eternity—tree of life, crown of life, and water of life. That is the note of glad-some assurance with which the Apocalypse closes. It presents *life*—endless, boundless, fadeless, measureless, life forevermore. Death has passed forever.

That is Inspiration's parting portrayal of the origin, nature, and destiny of man. God's eternal purpose, delayed but not defeated by the episode of sin, is now carried out in fullness. What a marvelous plan of redemption! What a matchless Saviour—in *Resurrection* and in *Life!*

Greek Terms and Usages—"Psuchē" (Soul); "Pneuma" (Spirit)

I. Characteristic Advantages, Disadvantages, and Pitfalls of Greek

The New Testament was written in Greek. The very terms we are now to survey were all fully established in this universal tongue, dominant at the dawn of the Christian Era. But at that time, it is to be remembered, the world was in pagan confusion. At that time endless being was regarded by some as a boon devoutly to be cherished, while by others it was considered an evil to be shunned.

With some, influenced by Orientalism, existence was a curse rather than a blessing, and *nirvana*, or annihilation of the individual personality, was esteemed as the goal of life and the summit of hope. Consequently, at the time of Christ and the apostles the Immortality of the soul was the question of all questions in the various schools of Grecian philosophy, as well as a point of division and contention. And as elsewhere seen, its penetration had tragically split the ranks in the Jewish faith.

Further, bodily resurrection to immortality—which was the supreme message of the primitive church and the paramount article of the early Christian faith—had no place in pagan speculation. When the early Greek sages brought back the lore of Egypt into Attica, it did not include the concept of a resurrection. And to the Greek intellect such an idea was utter foolishness. They saw the body return to the dust, and there they left it forever.

1. ISSUE OF IMMORTALITY OF PARAMOUNT CONCERN.—

As stated, immortality was a subject of swirling speculation among the Greeks, some maintaining and some refuting it—with a majority of pagan citizenry currently treating it as a jest. Nevertheless, the whole of life turned on the issue of the Immortality of the soul. The noblest specimens of human reasoning that ever charmed (and bewildered) the human intellect were the lofty speculations of Socrates and Plato, as set forth in the *Phaedo*—an attempt to establish the Innate Immortality of the soul and the assumption that whatever changes or pollutions it might suffer, or whatever pain it might endure, *the soul could not cease to be*.

By such there was believed to be a deathless, innate principle in the human soul, or spirit, that utterly refused to die. According to Plato it never could become a thing of the past, blotted out forever. And many of the Jews, particularly around Alexandria, had imbibed these teachings of undeniable pagan origin. Philo had just given this notion tremendous impetus. Such was the historical setting at the dawn of the Christian Era. This is all covered in Part III.

And all this involved certain language problems—advantages and disadvantages—in the proclamation of the gospel. Such was the complex linguistic and historical situation that confronted Christ and His apostles, to whom He committed His message, and the launching and upbuilding of His infant church.

2. CONFLICT OVER PUNISHMENT OF WICKED.—The terms and specifications of the punishment of the wicked, set forth by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament, were likewise in direct contradiction to the Platonic assertion that the soul cannot die, and therefore cannot be destroyed. The New Testament Christians insisted that the whole man *could and would die*, and cease to be. Platonism held that the real being could not perish and see corruption. The New Testament Christians asserted that the entire person of the wicked could and *would* ultimately and utterly perish and suffer cor-

ruption. And the Greek terminology unavoidably used by both sides was the same. What Plato affirmed, the primitive Christians denied. And likewise, what Platonism disavowed, the New Testament Christian asserted. And, be it remembered, both groups in the early Christian Era clearly sensed the utter clash in viewpoint.

All the phrases employed were in the Greek language, with its large vocabulary, its fine shadings, and its multiple tenses. Wherever the Christian preacher expounded his message on man, his origin, nature, and destiny, there were Platonists, Epicureans, Stoics, and Alexandrian Jews with their variant views, set to hear and refute—but all were bound together under the “scepter” of a common tongue, as someone has phrased it. To the Greek terminology and usage involved, then, we now turn.

II. *Psuchē* in New Testament Usage

1. HEBREW BACKGROUND OF THE EARLY CHURCH.—First of all, when we discuss the meanings of Greek words in the New Testament, we must remember that Christ and the disciples did not ordinarily converse in Greek during the events recorded in the Gospels, but in Aramaic. Their whole background was Hebrew, and their theological concepts were based on the Old Testament. It is true they lived in a Hellenized society, but when they used the Greek equivalents of Hebrew words, they certainly carried over into the new language the meanings they were accustomed to in their mother tongue.

Thus it is with the Greek word *psuchē* (“soul”). In the Septuagint, the Hebrew *nephesh* is rendered *psuchē*. When a New Testament Christian used the word *psuchē* he assuredly meant what *nephesh* connoted in his usual speech. On the other hand, of course, Hellenized Jews who had accepted the immortality of the soul doctrine from the Greek philosophers, would read back into *nephesh* the philosophy they had imbibed.

As Rejectors of the Overtures of Noah Perished in the Deluge, So Will Spurners of God's Overtures of Life Likewise Perish in the Flood of Fire.



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2. HOW THE TRANSLATORS RENDERED "PSUCHĒ."—*Psuchē* occurs 105 times in the New Testament, and in the K.J.V. is rendered "soul" 58 times, "life," or "lives," 40 times, "mind" 3 times, and "heart," "heartily," "us," and "you" once each. Since the word "soul" carries certain overtones of meaning that do not properly belong to the Greek word, or its Hebrew antecedent *nephesh*, it is proper to ask if the English "soul" is really the best word to use in an English rendering of the Greek.

It is interesting to notice the change in the number of times the word is used in the more recent English translations. In the R.S.V. "soul" or "souls" is used only 40 times in the New Testament. And in *The New English Bible* "soul" as a

translation of *psuchē* is used only 19 times. These newer translations tend to use personal pronouns or their equivalents and "life" to replace "soul" as a rendering of *psuchē*.

It must be admitted that translators have been influenced by their theological beliefs to some extent at least. For a man who believes that a person possesses an immortal soul, it is surely easier to render *psuchē* as "soul" in many places where complete objectivity would choose a different rendering. It would appear that later translators have been able to achieve this objectivity without regard to their personal beliefs more frequently than earlier translators.

It is possible to pass this kind of judgment because of the fact that the Bible does not teach that man has an immortal soul. The immortality of the soul can be read into the Bible only when one already believes that "soul" means an immortal something that can separate from the body at death and maintain a separate, conscious existence. Neither *psuchē* nor *nephesh* ever has any qualifying words like "immortal," "everlasting," "undying," or "endless," or any modifier of equivalent meaning attached to them. That is significant.

3. MEANINGS OF "PSUCHĒ" FALL INTO FOUR CATEGORIES.—An examination of Biblical usage reveals that the various meanings of *psuchē* may be divided into four basic groups.

(1) *A living organism.* First of all, used of *man* as an individual, as "The first man Adam was made a living soul [*psuchē*, here properly "living being"; see Gen. 2:7, R.S.V.]" (1 Cor. 15:45); and of lower animals, as, "every living soul [*psuchē*, here properly "living creature"; see Gen. 1:24, R.S.V.]" (Rev. 16:3).

(2) *A person, or personality.* "And fear came upon every soul [*psuchē*]" (Acts 2:43); and "Every soul [*psuchē*], which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed" (Acts 3:23). David's inspired Old Testament prediction of Christ is, "Thou wilt not leave my soul [*psuchē*] in hell [*hadēs*]" (Acts 2:27, quoting Ps. 16:10)—"my soul," that is, "myself," emphasizing the pronoun. And Peter at Pentecost says that David "spake

of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul [*psuchē*] was not left in hell [*hadēs*, gravedom], neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31). That was Christ Himself, His person.

(3) *The physical life of man.* Life, which can be destroyed, saved, laid down, et cetera.

(4) *The inward man.* The more remote but logical metaphysical meaning of the "inward man" appears in "Seeing ye have purified your souls [*psuchē*] in obeying the truth" (1 Peter 1:22), and in "My soul [*psuchē*] is exceeding sorrowful unto death" (Mark 14:34).

So the *living organism* in the physical realm is followed by the *person or personality*, and next the *physical life* itself. And finally comes the more remote metaphysical meaning of the *inward man*. It should be remembered that this inward man is not in Biblical usage a separate entity that can maintain a conscious existence apart from the body, but merely describes those aspects of man's nature that we might call spiritual as opposed to physical.

In general *The New English Bible* demonstrates a keen discrimination in the words used to translate *psuchē*. This is particularly well shown in the parable of the rich fool, where the various meanings of the word *psuchē* come in rather close juxtaposition:

"And he told them this parable: 'There was a rich man whose land yielded heavy crops. He debated with himself: "What am I to do? . . . I will pull down my storehouses and build them bigger. I will collect in them all my corn and other goods, and then say to myself [my *psuchē*], 'Man [*psuchē*], you have plenty of goods laid by, enough for many years: take life easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.'" But God said to him, "You fool, this very night you must surrender your life [*psuchē*]." . . . 'Therefore,' he said to his disciples, 'I bid you put away anxious thoughts about food to keep you alive [K.J.V., "your life (*psuchē*), what ye shall eat"] and clothes to cover your body. Life [*psuchē*] is more than food, the body more than clothes'" (Luke 12:16-23).¹

It is interesting to note that in *The New English Bible* the word "soul" is used in most cases to refer to the inward

¹ *The New English Bible*, New Testament. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961.

man. In the few exceptions there may be a variety of opinions as to the exact shade of meaning intended. On the basis that in many cases both *nephesh* and *psuchē* represent the man himself, personal pronouns would have served as accurate translations in at least three of these texts: James 5:20, "rescuing his soul [him] from death"; 1 Peter 1:9, "salvation for your souls [you]"; 1 Peter 4:19, "commit their souls [themselves] to him." In Revelation 6:9, "souls of those slaughtered," *psuchē* represents dead people; and in Revelation 20:4, "souls of those who had been beheaded," *psuchē* represents people who have died and have been resurrected in the second resurrection.

The one text that makes a clear distinction between soul and body in relation to death is Matthew 10:28 (N.E.B.): "Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Fear him rather who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Some might wish to see in this text proof that man has an immortal soul that survives death. But no matter what definition is applied to the word "soul" here, Immortality is one quality that is excluded, for the "soul" as well as the "body" may be destroyed in Hell.

III. *Pneuma* in New Testament Usage

In the Septuagint *pneuma* is the translation of the Hebrew word *rûach*, and what has been said about *rûach* in the Old Testament section can in general be said about *pneuma* in the New Testament.

The Greek word *pneuma* is related to *pneō*, meaning "to blow, breathe, or draw breath." The lexicons on classical Greek give "breath" and "wind" as the first meanings of *pneuma*. "Spirit" is also a common meaning of *pneuma*.

In the Greek text of the New Testament, *pneuma* occurs 385 times, and is translated in the K.J.V. as follows: "Spirit," 133; "spirit," 153; "spiritual," 1; "ghost," 2; "life," 1; and "wind," 1; or a total of 291. Then with the genitive, "spiritu-

ally," 1; with *hagion* ("holy") as Holy "Spirit," 4; Holy "Ghost," 89, a grand total of 385 times.

The R.S.V. drops the use of "ghost" as a translation of *pneuma*. Thus the words "spirit" and "spirits" occur 383³ times in the R.S.V. Concordance. The R.S.V. retains the translation "wind" for *pneuma* in John 3:8, "The wind blows where it wills," but translates *pneuma* as "breath" in Revelation 13:15, where the K.J.V. has "life."

Pneuma is used of Deity in the New Testament. In the R.S.V. this is indicated by capitalization, and a check reveals about 235 such usages. *The New English Bible* adds to this number by applying a few more occurrences of *pneuma* to Deity. Since there is obviously some measure of interpretation in this classification, perhaps no unanimity of opinion will give an absolutely accurate count. In nearly all of these instances "Spirit" is used of the third person of the Trinity.

Pneuma is also used of spirit beings—angels, both good and evil. Evil, unclean, or devilish spirits are referred to about 40 times. As applied to man, *pneuma* is used with the following meanings:

1. Man himself, by the figure synecdoche, a part being put for the whole. Thus in Luke 1:47 "my spirit" equals I myself.

2. Life, the living principle, which is represented by breath. Thus in Luke 8:55: "Her spirit [breath of life] came again, and she arose."

3. Character, as being itself invisible, and manifested only in one's actions (2 Tim. 1:7).

4. Other invisible characteristics, as feelings or desires. Matthew 26:41: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

5. The new nature in the child of God, "begotten" by God (John 3:3-7; Rom. 8:4-9).

6. The resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:45).

³ The difference between the K.J.V. and the R.S.V. in the number of occurrences is partly due to the critical text used for translating.



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IV. Exit and Re-entry of the Spirit

1. DEPARTURE OF "SPIRIT" FROM "BODY" AT DEATH.—It is essential for us to bear in mind that the Greek New Testament *pneuma* ("spirit") of man is the same as the *rûach* of the Old Testament Hebrew. There is no question about this. That they are identical not only is everywhere recognized but is established by the fact that the usual, if not invariable, rendering of *rûach*, in the Septuagint, is by *pneuma*, just as are the passages of the Old Testament containing *rûach*, when translated into the New Testament Greek (cf. Luke 23:46 and Ps. 31:5). This is incontrovertible proof.

Moreover, the very same things that are taught in the New Testament concerning *pneuma* are set forth in the Old Testament concerning *rûach*. And "spirit," in English, is *pneuma*. To this should be added the fact that the Latin *spiritus* is uniformly used in the Vulgate to render *pneuma*, just as in the LXX *pneuma* is used to express the Hebrew

rúach. Furthermore, "ghost" is from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning "*spirit*," "breath." Hence the three—*pneuma*, *spiritus*, and *ghost*—convey the same thought in the three languages.

The New Testament sets forth *pneuma* as being the source of physical life for man, together with its withdrawal as causing death. *Pneuma* may be defined as the activating principle of life, residing in the breath, breathed from God into man at creation, and returning to God again at death.⁹ God also made the air (Gen. 1:6-8), which man must breathe and have within him (Zech. 12:1), in order that life may be continued by constant breathing. The general principle is laid down by James, "The body without the spirit [*pneuma*] is dead" (chap. 2:26).

Thus our Lord's death is uniformly described in the four Gospels as *yielding up* (*aphiēmi*, "dismiss," "send forth," "send back," "let escape"), *breathing out* (*ekpneō*), or *giving up* (*paradidōmi*, "give up" or "hand over to another") the "ghost" (*pneuma*) or spirit, or to "commend" (*paratithēmi*, "to entrust," as a deposit). Note the varying forms of expression by the four evangelists—but with identical meaning, as concerns *ghost*, or *spirit*.

2. VARIANT WAYS OF EXPRESSING ACT OF DYING.—There are, in fact, seven passages in which "ghost" is thus used, which determine its meaning. First the Gospels, concerning Christ:

Matt. 27:50—*aphēken to pneuma* ("let go," or "send forth His spirit, or breath").

Mark 15:37, 38—*exepneusen* ("breathed out," "breathed His last," that is, "drew His last breath," "expired"). Cf. *ekpneō* ("breathe out," "expire").

Luke 23:46—*exepneusen* ("breathed out," etc.).

John 19:30—*paredōken to pneuma* ("gave over the breath").

Next note the other three—all wicked characters:

Acts 5:5—(re Ananias) *exepsuxen* ("breathe out," "expire," "die," etc.). From *ekpsuchō*, a medical term used by Luke.

⁹ Job 33:4; Ps. 146:4; 150:6; Isa. 2:22; Eze. 37:5, 10.

Acts 5:10—(re Sapphira) *exēpsuxen* ("breathe out," etc.).

Acts 12:23—(re Herod) *exēpsuxen* ("breathe out," "go out," "become extinct," etc.).

These variant ways of expressing the act of dying explain what takes place at death. They all refer to the *physical act* of dying—not dying a spiritual death, or the release of an unembodied spirit entity. (Cf. Gen. 2:7; Ps. 104:29, 30; 146:4; Eccl. 12:7.) That is the witness of the Word.

3. "SPIRIT" DEPARTS AT DEATH; RESTORED AT RESURRECTION.—As the presence of the "spirit" (*pneuma*) is the source of physical *life* to man, so its withdrawal, or dismissal, brings *death*—life's exact counterpart. This is exemplified in various instances, as just noted when our Lord's death is described as yielding "up the *ghost* [*pneuma*, "spirit"]" (Matt. 27:50; John 19:30). This is in direct antithesis to the restoration of life, or recovery from death, which the New Testament describes as the re-entry of the *pneuma* ("spirit") into the person who was dead.

Thus with Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter to life—The record is that "her *spirit* [*pneuma*] came again" (Luke 8:55). And "she arose straightway," and was given food. Similarly, in the Apocalypse the resurrection to life of the two symbolic "witnesses" who were "slain," is there portrayed as "the *spirit* [*pneuma*] of life from God entered into them" (Rev. 11:11). These passages establish the principle.

And as with Christ—"Father, into thy hands I commend my *spirit* [*pneuma*]: and having said thus, he gave up the *ghost* [*pneuma*, "spirit"]" (Luke 23:46). So with Stephen, the first Christian martyr—when stoned and dying, he solemnly and trustfully called upon the ascended Jesus and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my *spirit* [*pneuma*]" (Acts 7:59). He did not pray, "Lord, receive *me*," but "my *pneuma*." "And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (v. 60), with the sure and certain hope of receiving it back at the resurrection.

Thus in death the "spirit" (*pneuma*), which has been the source of life to man, returns to God who gave it, having

been commended by the believer into the hands of his God. But this expression, be it particularly noted, *is never used of the "soul."* However, it is frequently said of the "spirit," committed to God for safekeeping during the time of the death-sleep.

It is only believers who so *commit* the "spirit." Indeed, they are the only ones warranted in doing so. And thus when so given over to the care of God, the "spirit" is always committed *with a view to its restoration*. The "spirit" came from God, and returns to God (Eccl. 12:7). There is, however, this difference: In the resurrection of the wicked, the "spirit" is restored only for the purpose of the execution of judgment, and at the second death it returns *permanently* to God who gave it.

On the contrary, with the righteous the "spirit" is restored through Christ at the first resurrection, *with life eternal following*. Thus the righteous part with the *pneuma* only for a time, to receive it back forever. That is the joy of the Christian believer—the sure and certain hope of receiving the "spirit" back on the resurrection day, as the concomitant of life everlasting, pledged and promised in Christ. Such is the significance of the *pneuma*.

This caution should perhaps be added: Where Scripture is silent, we should be silent too. When the Scripture says, "The *spirit* shall return unto God," just as the *dust* shall return to dust (Eccl. 12:7), that is as far as we are authorized to go. Speculative theories on and beyond this point are unwise and unwarranted. And we dare not contradict Inspiration's declaration by assuming to put the spirit in "Paradise" or "Purgatory," as some are prone to do.

Terms and Usages: "Aiōn" and "Aiōnios"

I. Principles Governing the Meaning of *Aiōn* and *Aiōnios*

1. DEFINITIONS AND USAGES.—According to Young, the noun *aiōn* (meaning "aeon" or "age") occurs 128 times in the New Testament, in 102 passages—34 times in simple form, and 64 times in prepositional phrases and forms. The adjective *aiōnios* (belonging to an age) is used 67 times—42 times rendered "eternal" and 25 times as "everlasting." Even if *aiōn* meant "eternity"—which it does not—*aiōnios* could only mean "belonging to eternity," not necessarily lasting through it. And in not one of the passages does the word itself mean endless. There are classical Greek words that do stand for endless, but such words are not used in the New Testament. That too is significant.

Aiōn may be defined as a period of existence, or continuous being, whether a lifetime or an age. It is sometimes limited and sometimes denotes boundless periods and endless eternity. In 23 instances *aiōn* is doubled. The basic thought is always *continuity*, whether for a definite period, long or short, or for all time. It is often a "hidden" period—hidden as to precise length, sometimes terminable, sometimes interminable. So *aiōn*, like our term "age," denotes a period of undefined length.

In order to determine its length in any given instance, even relatively, the context and other passages where used must be considered, and especially the substantive to which



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Creator, Redeemer, Mediator, and Coming King, Christ Is the Sole Source and Bestower of Life Eternal for Mortal Man.

it is attached. Therefore *aionios* does not, and cannot, always have the same meaning, for it is modified or even altered by the substantive that it modifies.

2. SPECIFIC "AIŌNIOS" USAGES OUTLINED.—According to the Englishman's Greek Concordance, in the 24 passages in the New Testament where *aiōnios* is rendered "everlasting" 14 are used with *zōē*-life—meaning life without an end. Of the remaining 10, two are used with "fire" (continuing unquenchable until that on which the fire feeds is consumed); once with "punishment" (permanent in effect); once with "habitations" (doubtless the new earth) without end; once with "destruction" (like punishment); once with "consolation" (unending for the saved); once with "power" (ascribed to God, and hence without limit); once with "covenant" (unending in results); once with "kingdom of our Lord" (hence unceasing); and once with "gospel," or "power of God" (and thus limitless in duration—Rom. 1:16). So AIŌNIOS *always takes its meaning from the word to which it is attached.*

In the Authorized Version, in prepositional phrase form (with *aiōn* as the base), it appears some 68 times, and has been variously rendered: "since the world began" (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21); "from the beginning of the world" (Eph. 3:9); "for ever" (20 times); "ever" (Heb. 7:24); "for evermore" (Heb. 7:28); "for ever and ever" (20 times), et cetera.

II. *Aiōn* and *Aiōnios* in the Contrasts of Scripture

1. GOLDEN RULE: PERPETUITY WITHIN LIMITS.—*Aiōn* and *aiōnios*, when used in connection with *life* (*zōē*) for the righteous, mean constant, abiding, eternal, measureless. It involves unbounded existence and duration in the world to come. But when used of the continuance (or more accurately of the *consuming*) of the wicked, who are to be *destroyed*, it is transitory, and comes to an end. Everything consequently and consistently depends upon the nature and destiny of the substantive that it modifies. That is the golden rule of interpretation of these terms. It is perpetuity *within limits*—the duration being determined by the person, or thing, or condition to which it is attached.

Thus with the fate of the wicked. It is until their destruction is accomplished—not a process going on forever. The “fire” that shall not be “quenched” does not mean that it shall not ultimately cease. The fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah was “unquenchable” (no one could put it out), but it finally ceased burning. But this was not until its objective was accomplished. (This is discussed under “destruction,” and “punishment.”)

2. TWO DETERMINATIVE PRINCIPLES RE “AIŌNIOS.”—All are aware that *aiōn* and *aiōnios* have been the subject of avid dispute among proponents and opponents of the Innate-Immortality postulate. The issue has been: Do these terms mean endless or age enduring, or both, upon occasion? Two things need to be noted at the outset:

(1) *Aiōnios* is constantly predicated of the new supernatural life, received through regeneration by the Spirit of God. But, in contrast with this, *aiōnios* is *never*, in any of its forms, used in Scripture of the old, or natural, life of man. Furthermore, (2) it is *never*, anywhere throughout the entire Word of God, predicated of a continuing *death* as the penalty of sin. When used of death, it means *a period of limited duration*. These principles are determinative.

The terms “eternal death” and “everlasting death” are consequently not found in the Bible. *Life* may be brief, or long—or endless if it pleases God to perpetuate it—but *death* is a finality in itself, and needs no qualifying epithet. And that is the doom denounced upon sinners—“Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*” (James 1:15; cf. Rom. 6:23). This is the “second death,” which follows the judgment of the wicked. From this there is no resurrection. But of the *new life*, the spiritual life, the divine life, upon which the people of God enter, and of which the epithet *aiōnios* is predicated, and no other, is *zōē aiōnios*. It is without any limitation.

3. GEHAZI'S “FOR EVER”-LEPROSY LASTED UNTIL POSTERITY EXTINGUISHED.—The master key that unlocks the meaning of any

passage employing the terms *aiōn* or *aiōnios* is that they are to be taken to mean *as long as the thing or person* under consideration (in the light of the surrounding circumstances) *can exist*. Its duration is always determined by the noun to which it is attached. That simple principle will solve all problems and meet all cases.

Take an Old Testament example: The curse of leprosy upon Gehazi (2 Kings 5:27)—that the leprosy of Naaman "shall cleave unto thee [Gehazi], and unto thy seed *for ever*"—simply means that it should continue as long as Gehazi and his posterity should continue to exist. In other words, *until the line became extinct*. Then it would cease. And, under the terms of this prophecy, it must have taken place fairly soon. It is restricted to the extent of the duration of the thing or person to which it is applied. The "for ever" of Gehazi was consequently only until his posterity became extinct.

4. LENGTH GOVERNED BY NOUN TO WHICH ATTACHED.—When *aiōn* and *aiōnios* are applied to Divine Beings, or to the eternal home of the saints, or to the redeemed, immortalized saints, they then obviously denote *eternal duration, or eternity of being*. But as noted, when *aiōn* and *aiōnios* are applied to things that will have an end, they are correspondingly limited in meaning. Thus, when they are applied to the existence of the wicked—who will finally cease to be as the result of the "second death"—they must be limited, according to their signification.

We must consequently conclude that the modifiers *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, with reference to the two classes—"saints" and "sinners"—mean, respectively, *bliss throughout all eternity*, on the one hand, for the eternally *righteous*, and on the other hand *coming to an end forever*, after a due and just period of suffering for the unrepentant and doomed sinner. The wicked are ultimately and utterly extinguished because they refused the eternal life so freely offered to them, which is nevertheless to continue throughout the ages without end for the righteous, who accepted its provisions.

5. BODY BLOW TO IMMORTAL-SOUL THEORY.—We have already established the fact that *aiōnios* ("eternal" or "everlasting") is constantly coupled with *zōē* in Scripture—giving the meaning of endlessness to the life. And we have stressed the point that *aiōnios* is *never*, in Scripture, joined with *psuchē*. It therefore follows that such terms as "immortal soul," "never-dying soul," and the like, though frequently used by many ecclesiastics and philosophers, are not found anywhere between the covers of Holy Writ.

That inexorable fact is a body blow to the Immortal-Soul theory. Those who possess nothing higher than the natural *psuchē*-life from Adam are destined to perish, and ultimately cease to be. And inspired Bible usage counterbalances and nullifies any and all human opinions to the contrary.

6. RESTRICTED USE IN THE APOCALYPSE.—And observe this added point: In the Apocalypse, where the plural form *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* ("to ages of the ages") appears frequently,¹ the reference is usually to personified organizations, systems, or associations (such as "beast," "Babylon," "false prophet") which must be punished, but *which will not exist in the world to come*.

III. Texts Exemplify Diversified Meanings of *Aiōn* and *Aiōnios*

Before testing out these principles with a diversified group of New Testament passages, let us first establish the connection between Old Testament and New Testament usage.

The Septuagint again constitutes the vital link between the Hebrew Old Testament *ʾōlam* and the Greek New Testament *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, and provides a second valuable key to right understanding. In the Septuagint use of *aiōnios*, God and His attributes, kingdom, and covenant are set forth as unlimited and eternal. But earthly objects, belonging to a passing dis-

¹ Rev. 1:6; 4:9, 10; 5:13, 14; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5. The difference between the K.J.V. and the R.S.V. in the number of occurrences is partly due to the critical text used for translating.

pensation, and divine dealings not lasting beyond the continuance of the earth in its present form are always set forth as limited, or restricted, in duration.

Thus it is with the priests' office (Ex. 29:9), "perpetual" statutes (Lev. 3:17), the burning of Ai (Joshua 8:28), "perpetual hissing" (Jer. 18:15, 16), "perpetual desolations" (Jer. 25:12; Eze. 35:9; Zeph. 2:9), "perpetual wastes" (Jer. 49:13), et cetera. This mixed usage constitutes a reliable guide to New Testament practice.

Eighteen Dissimilar Examples Typify Differences

Here are eighteen annotated New Testament examples of this multiple usage with the Greek original, and its literal meaning:

Matt. 13:39—"The harvest is the end of the world [*sunteleia tou aiōnos*, "consummation of the age," or *aiōn*]."

Matt. 21:19—"Let no fruit grow on thee [barren fig tree] henceforward for ever [*eis tōn aiōna*, for the remainder of its life—not to all eternity]."

Luke 1:70—"Which have been since the world began [*tōn ap' aiōnos*, "since time began," "from all time," "from the age," "from of old"]."

Luke 20:35—"Accounted worthy to obtain that world [*tou aiōnos*, "that other age," "the age to come"]."

John 9:32—"Since the world began [*ek tou aiōnos*, "out of the age"] was it not. . . ."

John 13:8—"Thou shalt never wash my feet [*eis tōn aiōna*, "never while the world lasts," "as long as I live," "not to all eternity"]."

Acts 15:18—"All his works from the beginning of the world [*ap' aiōnos*, "from the age," "from of old," "eternity"]."

Rom. 16:25—"Which was kept secret since the world began [*chronois aiōniois*, "through ages long past," or "along with times eternal"]."

1 Cor. 2:7—"Which God ordained before the world [*pro tōn aiōnōn*, "age or age-time," "of indefinite duration"]."

1 Cor. 10:11—"Upon whom the ends of the world [*tōn aiōnōn*, "of the ages"] are come."

2 Cor. 4:4—"The god of this world [*tou aiōnos toutou*, "of this present age"] hath blinded."

Gal. 1:4—"Deliver us from this present evil world [*ek tou . . . aiōnos*, "out of the present age or period"]."

Eph. 2:7—"That in the *ages to come* [*en tois aiōsin*, "in the periods of the future"] he might shew."

2 Tim. 1:9—"Given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began* [*pro chronōn aiōniōn*, "before the ages of time," or "before times eternal"]."

Titus 1:2—"Eternal life, which God . . . promised *before the world began* [*pro chronōn aiōniōn*, "before times eternal," "before the commencement of the ages," "long ages ago"]."

Heb. 1:2—"By whom [His Son] also he made *the worlds* [*tous aiōnas*, "ages"]."

Heb. 11:3—"The *worlds* [*tous aiōnas*, "ages"] were framed by the word of God."

Jude 25—"Be . . . dominion and power, *both now and ever* [*eis pantas tous aiōnas*, "to all the ages," "before every age and now and unto all the ages"]."

Let us now analyze the evidence, seeking out and applying the sound guiding principles disclosed by these and other passages wherein usage alone is determinative.

IV. Sound Interpretative Principles Emerge for Guidance

The fact that the adjective *aiōnios* is applied to some things that are "endless" does not for a moment prove that it always means endless, for such a rendering would, in many passages, be manifestly impossible and absurd. Further, the adjective "eternal" (*aiōnios*) and the adverbial phrases that express eternity (such as "forever," and "forever and ever"), indicate an *indeterminate duration*, whereof the maximum depends upon the nature of the person or thing that it modifies.

It is clearly infinite when predicated of God and eternal things, which are above and beyond time, or of beings who live by faith in communion and connection with Him. On the contrary, it is only relative for other beings, such as mortal man. Thus the sufferings of perishable creatures logically cannot be prolonged longer than is compatible with their perishable nature.

The length must be inferred and determined from the context and the nature of the thing or persons under considera-

tion. For example, in Romans 16:25, 26 the mystery of the gospel, hidden in times past—"chronois aiōniois" (along with eternal times, but which have come to an end)—is placed in contrast with *aiōniou Theou* ("eternal God," v. 26, R.S.V., endless and independent of all time). To hold that *aiōnios* in the one instance must mean the same as the other is manifestly an absurdity.

The Old Testament equivalents of *aiōn* and *aiōnios* were applied to the passing Aaronic priesthood, the inheritance given to Caleb, the period of the slave's life, the burning of the fire upon the altar, the leprosy of Gehazi, et cetera.² One notable case in point was "the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up *for ever*: from generation to generation it shall *lie waste*; none shall pass through it *for ever and ever*" (Isa. 34:9, 10). And in Deuteronomy 23:3, 6 "for ever" is limited to the "tenth generation." Such examples afford sound principles for our guidance.

1. VAST SCOPE OF MEANING OF "AIŌN" EXHIBITED.—In the Authorized Version *aiōn* is frequently translated "world." Later, the revisers usually rendered *aiōn* by "age," at least in the margin. The Greek word for "world," in its material framework, is, of course, *kosmos*, while *aiōn* is earth's history in the larger setting of eternity. It is finite man in a finite world, preceded and followed by the timeless eternities of past and future. God, the King of the "ages," laid His redemptive plans before the ages began to unroll, and sent forth His Son at the appointed time to consummate His matchless plan for the redemption of humanity.

In its backward look in depth, *aiōn* was a period lost in the mists of past eternity—the farthest dawn of time (Luke 1:70; John 9:32; Acts 15:18; Jude 25). But it may refer not only

² Dean F. W. Farrar states that in the Septuagint, which gives a reliable Greek parallel, the Hebrew *'ôlam* is rendered by *aiōn* 439 times. And in Exodus, twelve of its fourteen usages are "of things which have passed away; in Leviticus, twenty-four times, always of things which have come to an end; and in Numbers ten times; in Deuteronomy about ten times."—*Mercy and Judgment* (2d ed.), p. 378.

backward to time without beginning, but forward as well, as without end in the future. Thus we see that one group of *aiōn* texts tells of that which is *divine and endless*—God Himself (Rom. 16:26); His attributes (1 Tim. 6:16); His kingdom (2 Peter 1:11); His covenant (Heb. 13:20), et cetera.

Another group tells of the “ages” planned by God (Rom. 16:25; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2). A third group tells of His various acts and activities—“punishment” (Matt. 25:46); “judgment” (Mark 3:29; Heb. 6:2); “destruction” (2 Thess. 1:9); “salvation” (Heb. 5:9); “redemption” (chap. 9:12), et cetera. And there are lesser categories, but there is no conflict. Let us note a few important points.

2. GOD HAS INFINITY; MAN DOES NOT.—There is a common misconception that any existence beyond this life is eternal, and that anything that is indefinitely extended is infinite and endless. But infinity is an attribute of God alone. He is the “King eternal, immortal, invisible,” et cetera (1 Tim. 1:17), “*who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto*” (chap. 6:16). Therefore, intrinsic eternity of being cannot be the attribute of any creature, or he would be equal to his Creator.

Man does not, and cannot, possess God’s infinite attributes. Man can and does have wisdom, intelligence, power, and other attributes of free moral agents. But because of the very fact of his creation he must be dependent upon God for all that he is and has (Acts 17:28).

God gives to man “life.” But this life is subordinate to God’s own absolute, original, underived, self-existent life. God may prolong man’s life, even without end. But such life is ever conditioned on God’s will, power, and pleasure. It is contingent, and cannot be an independent life. The life everlasting, or immortality—which He has promised to all who are united to Him—is everlasting simply because such beings are in vital connection with Him. Such life is not absolute, but *conditional*. It is because He thus keeps them that the redeemed will be immortal.

Again, because the wicked will live again after the first death, some jump to the conclusion that such life after death will be endlessly perpetuated. But the Scriptures solemnly assure us that the wicked dead are to be raised, judged, and *destroyed* with an everlasting destruction, which is the "second death" (Rev. 20:6, 14, 15; 21:8).

The present earth and sinners are not to be forever in process of destruction by the purifying fires of the last day. The new earth is to rise from its ashes (Rev. 21; 22; 2 Peter 3:10-13). And the *new* earth, purified from all the pollutions of sin and free from all the deformities of the curse, is to be the everlasting abode of the righteous forever. Those are the contrasts left on record for our guidance.

3. "AIŌNIOS"—ETERNAL IN RESULTS, NOT IN PROCESS.—Many illustrious scholars recognize that the meaning must be sought not in *aiōnios* but in the noun to which it is attached.³ Let us apply the principle: If the noun stands for that which is essentially eternal, then the accompanying adjective (*aiōnios*) is properly translated eternal. But if it is applied to that which is temporal and terminable, then *aiōnios* simply means lasting to the natural limits of the noun. Thus the "*eternal God*" (Rom. 16:26, R.S.V.), "*eternal Spirit*" (Heb. 9:14), and "*eternal kingdom of our Lord*" (2 Peter 1:11, R.S.V.) are all clear and incontrovertible. Here the adjective has the meaning of endless, for the existence of Deity and His divine attributes and kingdom are without end.

But when *aiōnios* modifies nouns of action, such as an "*eternal judgment*" (Heb. 6:2), "*everlasting punishment*" (Matt. 25:46), and the everlasting *fires of Gehenna*, it must be understood as lasting "forever" in the sense of everlasting *results* rather than an everlasting *process*. It is the *verdict* of the judgment that is immutable and stands forever—*eternity of result, not of process*. The same is true of "eternal *redemp-*

³ That *aiōn* can mean either a finite or an infinite period—a human lifetime or an eternity of endless duration, according to the nature of the case or usage—is sustained by many standard authorities, such as Greenfield, Schrevelius, Liddell and Scott, Parkhurst, Robinson, Schleusner, Wahl, Cruden, Strong, Young, Bullinger, et cetera.

tion" (Heb. 9:12). This is not an endless process, but the eternal result of Christ's once-for-all redemptive activity for man's salvation.

Similarly with "eternal *destruction*." A thing is not destroyed until the act of destroying comes to an end. The *results* of the destructive process are therefore eternal. When *aiōnios* modifies "punishment," the process is not one of eternally punishing but the eternal result of a terminative process. When a criminal is hanged, electrocuted, or gassed, the process is not one of eternal hanging, electrocuting, or gassing. The criminal is deprived of life forever.

In the case of "eternal *fire*" (Jude 7), the duration is determined by the nature of the fire, which burns until it consumes that upon which it is feeding, and then ceases—as with Sodom and Gomorrah, where the complete destruction of the cities is set forth as an example of the *purōs aiōniou* which will destroy the wicked.

4. REVELATION 20:10—EXAMPLE OF LIMITED TORMENT. —That the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios* often denote a limited period, and not always one of eternal duration, is apparent even from Revelation 20:10.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented *day and night for ever* [*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*, "to the ages of the ages"]."

The limitation in the text is explicit. The verse does not refer to all the wicked, but speaks only of the devil and the symbolic "beast" and the "false prophet." The "lake of fire," as the place and means of torment, is mentioned in verse 14. But there it is the declared symbol of *complete and final utter destruction*. "Death and *hadēs*" are cast into the lake of fire, after which it is recorded, "There shall be *no more death*" (Rev. 21:4). It comes to an end. Whatever was cast into the lake of fire, after it has wrought its destruction, no longer exists. In Revelation 20:15 is the declaration that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake

of fire." This marks the final disposition, through destruction, of all who are not saved in the kingdom of God.⁴

Again, Revelation 14:11 represents the duration, or period, of the *unrest* of a special group. It, too, represents a limited period that will end. As seen elsewhere, this allusion to the *smoke ascending* is clearly a figure of speech, and to make that the basis of a doctrine which contradicts all the plain teaching of the Word on this question, as well as making God infinitely cruel, cannot be the proper exegesis.⁵

5. BEWARE OF UNSCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS AND UNSOUND REASONING.—The rendering of the same word (*aiönios*) once by "everlasting" and the other by "eternal"—as they appear twice in the same verse—is a purely arbitrary translator variation. Note it: "And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment* [*kolasin aiönion*, "everlasting in result"]; but the righteous into *life eternal* [*zōēn aiönion*]" (Matt. 25:46).

But, far more important, we must beware of eisegetically reading into the word *kolasis* ("punishment") a sense that it does not possess. "Punishment," here, is the opposite of life only if that punishment be "death"—which it is. The eternal *result* is the same in both cases. There is no validity, for example, to Augustine's argument that if we do not make *aiönios kolasis* mean endless punishing,⁶ we have no assurance that the *aiönios zōē* that follows means endless *living*—and that we thereby lose our promise of everlasting happiness.

Such an Immortal-Soulist contention is utterly invalid.

⁴ In this Dr. R. F. Weymouth concurs:

"The use in the N.T. of such words as 'death,' 'destruction,' 'fire,' 'perish,' to describe Future Retribution, point to the likelihood of fearful anguish, followed by extinction of being, as the doom which awaits those who by persistent rejection of the Saviour prove themselves utterly, and therefore irremediably, bad."—*The New Testament in Modern Speech* (3d ed.), on Heb. 10:27, n. 1.

⁵ According to Archbishop R. C. Trench (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 208, 209) *aiön* often means the "duration of the human life." Prof. Herman Cremer (*Biblico Theological Lexicon*, p. 74) likewise says, "Duration of human life, as limited to a certain space of time . . . hence the duration of life, course of life, terms of life, life term, life in its temporal form."

⁶ As to Augustine, Dean F. W. Farrar soundly remarked that—"aiön, aiönios, and their Hebrew equivalents in all combinations, are repeatedly used of things which *have come and shall come to an end*. Even Augustine admits (what, indeed, no one can deny) that in Scripture *aiön, aiönios* must in many instances mean 'having an end'; and St. Gregory of Nyssa, who at least knew Greek, uses *aiönios* as the epithet of 'an interval.'"—*Eternal Hope* (1879), excursus III, "On the Word *Aiönios*," p. 197. (Italics his.)

Our sure and certain hope of everlasting happiness rests on no such flimsy foundation as the disputed meaning of a Greek adjective, which is often used of things that are transitory. We have the clear, positive, and explicit foundations of God's nonfigurative affirmations recorded for our assurance.⁷ Sound doctrine is based on solid Scripture, and sound reasoning therefrom.

⁷ Here are a few: Isa. 25:6-8; Hosea 13:14; Luke 20:36; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Peter 1:4; 5:4; Rev. 21:4; et cetera.

Terms and Usages: "Immortal," "Incorruption," "Immortality," "Eternal Life"

I. "Immortality"—Springs From God, Bestowed on Man

We next note the Greek terms and usages involved in the Immortality aspect. First, note the three foundational words used to express Immortal, Incorruption, and Immortality—together with eternal life. These are:

(1) *Athanasia* ("immortality"), which occurs three times in the New Testament, and is each time translated "immortality." In the Latin Vulgate it is rendered *immortalitas*, whence comes our "immortality." (2) *Aphtharsia* ("incorruption," "incorruptibility," "unending existence," "immortality") occurs eight times in the New Testament. It is rendered "incorruption" four times; "immortality" twice, and "sincerity" twice. In the Vulgate it is usually rendered *incorruptio*, whence comes our "incorruption." But it is once given as *immortalitas* (1 Cor. 15:45). Then (3) *aphthartos* ("incorruptible," "undecaying," "immortal"), the corresponding Greek adjective, occurs seven times in the New Testament—six times translated "incorruptible" and once as "immortal" (1 Tim. 1:17).

I. "ATHANASIA" ("IMMORTALITY")—POSSESSED BY GOD; PUT ON BY MAN.—Thrice translated "immortality," *athanasia* is defined by Greenfield and Robinson simply as "immortality." Here are the passages:

(1) 1 Cor. 15:53—"This mortal must put on [*endusasthai*, as a garment] *immortality* [*athanasian*]."

(2) 1 Cor. 15:54—"When . . . this mortal shall have put on *immortality* [*athanasian*]."

(3) 1 Tim. 6:15, 16—"The King of kings, and Lord of lords; *who only hath immortality* [*athanasian*]."

It is to be particularly noted that in these three places where *athanasia* occurs, the two points most vital to the doctrine of Immortality are included. These are: (1) That it is possessed only by God—"who only hath immortality," and (2) that "mortal" man must "*put on*" Immortality in order to receive it. And this, as seen elsewhere, is not until the resurrection-translation day, at the second coming of Christ.

2. "IMMORTALITY" IS IMMUNITY TO DEATH OR DESTRUCTION.—"Immortality," then, according to definition and scriptural usage, is deathlessness—immunity to death or destruction. It is endless duration of life, or undyingness. *Athanasia* is made up of "*a*," without, and "*thanatos*," death. (There is also the comparable *aphtharsia*, or imperishability, which is likewise immunity to death or destruction.)

There are thus two angles to the concept of Immortality in the New Testament, namely: (1) That of freedom from death, or deathlessness—never dying from any cause; and (2) freedom from the elements of corruption that bring forth death. Both, in the absolute, ultimate sense, apply exclusively to God, and to man only contingently and conditionally through voluntary and conscious union with Christ. This will be received personally and actually at the resurrection, or translation, of the righteous, at the second coming of Christ.

3. NOT NATURAL ENDOWMENT BUT SPECIAL BESTOWMENT.—Natural Immortality is clearly not the common destiny of all men irrespective of the course pursued. Endless life is the reward only of seekers for righteousness and life. Immortality is consequently not a *natural endowment* but a *special bestowment*, made possible through the provisions of God's grace. It is not the universal possession of all mankind, but a gift of God to individual regenerate men in Christ. It is therefore *conditional*.

Paul's inspired declaration, that "our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10), therefore becomes radiant with meaning. Our human nature has no enduring life apart from God. Separated from Him "who only hath immortality," our nature not only sinks into degeneration but is destined to "eternal destruction." To God is the power and the glory for the Immortality that comes to us.

II. Athanasia, Aphthartos, Aphtharsia—Restrict Innate Immortality to God

1. "APHTHARTOS" ("INCORRUPTIBLE") LIKEWISE CONFINED EXCLUSIVELY TO GOD.—The Greek adjective *aphthartos* ("incorruptible"), from which the single instance of the term "immortal" is translated (1 Tim. 1:17), occurs seven times in the New Testament, the six other cases being rendered "incorruptible"—and defined by Greenfield as "incorruptible, immortal, imperishable, undying, enduring." The seven passages follow, with the key statement of the text:

(1) Rom. 1:23—"Changed the glory of the *incorruptible* [*aphthartou*] God into an image made like to corruptible man."

(2) 1 Cor. 9:25—"They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an *incorruptible* [*aphtharton*]."

(3) 1 Cor. 15:52—"The dead shall be raised *incorruptible* [*aphthartoi*], and we shall be changed."

(4) 1 Tim. 1:17—"The King eternal, *immortal* [*aphthartō*], invisible, the only wise God."

(5) 1 Peter 1:4—"To an inheritance *incorruptible* [*aphtharton*], and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

(6) 1 Peter 1:23—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible* [*aphthartou*]."

(7) 1 Peter 3:4—"That which is not *corruptible* [*aphthartō*], even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

The first four usages are by Paul, the last three by Peter. In the first passage *aphthartos* is used to describe God. In the second Paul utilizes it to depict the heavenly crown of the overcomer. In the third it is used to set forth the glories of

the redeemed at the resurrection. In the fourth it is translated "immortal" and presents this unique and absolute attribute of God, the Eternal One. In the fifth Peter makes use of it to describe the inheritance reserved in Heaven for the overcomer. In the sixth it is used to set forth the creative principle by which regeneration is wrought in us. And in the seventh Peter again employs it to describe the heavenly adorning we are laboring to secure. These complete the instances.

Be it noted that in no case is *aphthartos* applied to man as a whole or to any part of man as a *natural* possession. It affirms that Christ brought Immortality, or incorruption, to light by coming to abolish death (2 Tim. 1:10). There could have been no life or Immortality without this, for the race was hopelessly doomed to death through sin. Christ abolished death by dying for man, and rising again a victor over death, thus preserving Immortality for us.

But this avails only for those who *accept* the proffered provision. Those who reject it will meet the same fate as would have been the lot of all, had not Christ undertaken the work of redemption with its imperishable boon. And it is to be particularly observed that *aphthartos is never joined with the words for "soul" or "spirit" of man, in any of their 1,644 occurrences.* It is predicated of only one being—the Eternal God. This is both highly significant and conclusive.

2. "APHTHARSIA" ("INCORRUPTION")—NOT INALIENABLE POSSESSION OF MAN.—And finally there is *aphtharsia*, defined as "incorruptibility," "incorruptness," and by implication, "immortality." *Aphtharsia* occurring eight times (and twice rendered "immortality")¹ presents Immortality or incorruption from the *material* side (1 Cor. 15:42, 50, 53, 54), also from the *spiritual* (Eph. 6:24), and also from both aspects (Rom. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:10). The passages follow:

(1) Rom. 2:7—"Seek for glory and honour and immortality [*aphtharsian*], eternal life [*zōēn aiōnion*]."

¹ Thus in Rom. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:10 *aphtharsia* is translated "immortality"—otherwise "incorruption" or "sincerity."

(2) 1 Cor. 15:42—"Sown in corruption; it is raised in *incorruption* [*aphtharsia*]."

(3) 1 Cor. 15:50—"Neither doth corruption inherit *incorruption* [*aphtharsian*]."

(4) 1 Cor. 15:53—"This corruptible must put on *incorruption* [*aphtharsian*]."

(5) 1 Cor. 15:54—"When this corruptible shall have put on *incorruption* [*aphtharsian*]."

(6) Eph. 6:24—"Love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity [lit., "uncorruptness," *aphtharsia*]."

(7) 2 Tim. 1:10—"Who ["our Saviour Jesus Christ"] hath abolished death, and hath brought *life* [*zōēn*] and *immortality* [*aphtharsian*] to light."

(8) Titus 2:7—"Uncorruptness, gravity, *sincerity* [*aphtharsian*, "incorruptibility"]."²

Note that in the second one Paul refers to the body *after* the resurrection. And in the third, fourth, and fifth Paul declares that "incorruption" cannot be inherited in our present mortal condition, and that "incorruption" must be *put on* before we can enter the kingdom of God. In the sixth and eighth it is used to describe the love we should bear to Christ, and the quality of doctrine we should hold. The seventh shows the relation of the gospel to Immortality.

3. OBSERVATION.—That is the complete Biblical testimony on Immortality and incorruptibility. So far from being applied to man inherently, it points out the supreme contrast between God and man. Man is now only corruptible and mortal. Incorruptibility and Immortality are for man an object of hope, for which he is to *seek*. These terms contrast the heavenly and the eternal with the earthly and the decaying. In other words, the Biblical usage in no way implies or sustains the popular Innate Immortality of the soul postulate.

III. The Five English Uses of Immortal/Immortality Examined

1. GOD THE POSSESSOR, MAN THE FUTURE RECEIVER.—Let us next coordinate the evidence of the terms "immortal" and "immortality." These are used but *five* times in the whole of

² Omitted by Griesbach, Lochmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, and Codex Sinaiticus.

The Reality of Christ's Resurrection Body Is a Type of Our Glorified Bodies That Will Live Forever in the Earth Made New.



WILLIAM HOLE, ARTIST

REVIEW PICTURES

Scripture, and all occur in the New Testament. An examination of these five illuminates and clarifies the whole immortality question. Note them:

(1) "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath *immortality* [*athanasian*, "deathlessness"], dwelling in the light which no man [*oudeis*, "no one of men"] can *approach* [*aprositon*, "inapproachable," "inaccessible"] unto" (1 Tim. 6:15, 16).

Here the word "immortality," one of three places where it comes from the Greek *athanasia* in Holy Writ, is expressly declared to be an attribute that belongs to God alone, *along with His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence*. It is in the same category of exclusives. The inescapable inference therefore is that Immortality (like the other restrictive attributes of Deity) is a quality that man does *not* possess inherently, inalienably, or naturally.

This declaration agrees with the description in 1 Timothy 1:17 of "the King *eternal, immortal, invisible*, the only wise God." It stands out in contrast with "mortal man" (Job 4:17), who is subject to *time* and to *death*. We are admonished

to "seek" for Immortality (Rom. 2:7), and are to receive it as a "gift" (chap. 6:23). But it will not be "put on" until the resurrection, when "mortality" shall "be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4). It is *not* ours inherently, or actually, as yet. It is ours now *in Christ*—vested in Him.

(2) "By the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought *life* [zōēn] and *immortality* [aphtharsian, "incorruption"] to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

Here Christ is presented as the revealer and bringer of Immortality to man. The eternal Son of God came into the world to bring within the knowledge and range and experience of man that everlastingness of perfect being which is now the exclusive possession of Deity alone. But it is promised to and for us.

(3) "To them who by patient continuance in well doing *seek* for . . . *immortality* [aphtharsian, "incorruption"], *eternal life* [zōēn aiōnion]" (Rom. 2:7).

Immortality is therefore *not* a present, innate possession of the human race, but is something diligently to be sought for and gained, and to those who seek for it in God's approved way, Immortality, or *eternal life* (zōē aiōnios), will be granted. It is incredible to think of being admonished to seek for something already possessed, and from which, according to popular theology, we could not be dispossessed.

(4) "For this *corruptible* [phtharton] must put on *incorruption* [aphtharsian], and this *mortal* [thnēton, "liable or subject to death"] must put on *immortality* [athanasian]" (1 Cor. 15:53).

The inference is consequently clear that man in his present state is mortal and corruptible, but that it is God's plan for him to "put on" Immortality and incorruption. Needless to say, one does not put on what is already a natural, inherent, and inalienable quality or possession. We would not put on what we have had ever since being born into the world. And man obviously cannot be both mortal and immortal at the same time. He is *not* immortal now.

(5) "So when this *corruptible* [*phtharton*] shall have put on *incorruption* [*aphtharsian*], and this *mortal* [*thnēton*] shall have put on *immortality* [*athanasian*], then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

The time, according to the same apostle, when this mortal shall "*put on*" Immortality is at the resurrection, or translation—the resurrection at the Second Advent being the central theme of this chapter (see v. 52).

2. RECAPITULATION OF FIVEFOLD WITNESS.—God is the sole present possessor of Immortality. He is therefore the source from which man, at present mortal, must obtain Immortality. Christ is the revealer, the channel, the custodian, and the conveyer of immortal life. Not only has He brought to light the *possibility* of Immortality for dying man but He has provided in Himself the channel through which it may flow to us. Man is to seek for it by patient, godly living in Christ—and *all such seekers will be rewarded*. It is the reward of vital faith. Mortal man will put on Immortality at the resurrection of the *just* (Luke 20:36).

Immortality, then, is not a prerogative but a privilege, not an inheritance but an achievement, not a natural endowment conferred by nature at birth but a conditional gift conferred by Jesus Christ at His second advent, on the ground of a new birth, and abiding faith in and obedience to Him throughout life. The belief that man is immortal is an a priori assumption, that is, a reasoning based upon deducing consequences from definitions regarded as self-evident, but by reason alone, and not through established Biblical evidence. It is therefore presumption, without Scripture proof, and contrary to Scripture.

Next let us turn to a serious problem that perplexes many.

IV. Problem: "Eternal Life" and "Immortality"—Differences, Similarities, and Relationships

1. PROBLEM: ARE "ETERNAL LIFE" AND "IMMORTALITY" EQUIVALENTS?—A very real problem that must be faced frankly and resolved honestly and Biblically is the relationship between

two frequently used scriptural terms, "eternal life" and "immortality," and the far-reaching provisions for which they stand. Are they actually identical in meaning, being simply different expressions for the same thing, such as "regeneration" and the "new birth"? Or are there basic differences? Some maintain that they are one and the same—"eternal life" being, in reality, simply an equivalent for "immortality." If that be so then the terms can properly be equated, and the one expression used interchangeably for the other.

But this assertion must be put to test, for if such a contention be true, then its correctness can be substantiated by substituting one term for the other in the various passages. If correct, such a usage should always make sense, without straining the meaning or creating conflict and confusion. On the other hand—and far more important—if such a procedure does violence to both the general and the specific teachings of Scripture, it is manifestly wrong. Let us therefore test out this matter, for much haziness and grave misconception exist in the popular mind over the question, *Are eternal life and Immortality interchangeable terms?* We cannot afford to be mistaken as to their relationships.

As a clue in advance, we shall find, in general, that eternal life is a life of union with God in Christ. It begins now, in trust, and comes to consummation in the tangible bestowal of Immortality, or deathlessness, for man at the Second Advent and its attendant resurrection. It is likewise true that eternal life is the portion of the *believer only*, not the inherent privilege of the sinner. Awareness of these principles will make it easier to follow the specific evidence to be presented. First look at some foundational facts.

2. GOD'S IMMORTALITY ABSOLUTE; MAN'S ALWAYS CONTINGENT.—The "life" that Greek philosophy fondly fancied might exist intrinsically in the soul itself is, on the contrary, to be found solely in the person of Jesus Christ Himself. Moreover, the life that He will bestow upon His people is vastly greater and more wonderful than Plato ever conceived. But the

fundamental point of disparity is this: Apart from Christ, there is no abiding life. And aside from the pure Christian faith, all other systems or philosophical concepts as concerns life and Immortality are distorted by error. In the gospel of the Word alone is to be found truth without error, as pertains to life in all its aspects. To this Word we therefore turn.

First of all, Scripture reveals that God alone is eternal, that is, without beginning or end. ("From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God"—Ps. 90:2.) He alone has absolute Immortality—*independent, innate, inalienable, "original, unborrowed, underived," inviolable, inexhaustible, all-comprehensive Immortality* (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). Man, on the contrary, is a created being, a creature of time, who was not, but came into being, and can pass out of being at the will of God. Man, mortal since the Fall and subject to death, is to receive Immortality, or immunity to death. It is to be bestowed upon him as a gift, but not until the Second Advent and its attendant resurrection-translation of the righteous.

In contrast with God's Innate Immortality, man's conferred Immortality will be derived, dependent, contingent, and *not* self-perpetuating, but ever subject to God's continuing grace and power. Man will never have Immortality independent of God. This should never be forgotten. What God has created He can dissolve and destroy. Without life from God we are under sentence of death, past all hope, and dead or dying by reason of trespasses and sins. And Immortality will never be bestowed upon the willfully wicked. It is for the righteous alone.

3. ETERNAL LIFE—GOD'S BY NATURE; MAN'S TO RECEIVE.—Eternal life [*zōē aiōnios*] is proffered to man, and promised to him if he believes and obeys the conditions laid down for its reception. In such an event he is "ordained" unto eternal life. It will become his as a "gift." He is to "lay hold" upon it. But for man, eternal life is ever vested in Christ. Man has it *now* in Christ—but only *when he is "in Christ," and Christ is "in him."* So "eternal life" is the broader, more comprehensive

term. It is God's inherently, and man's to receive conditionally and contingently. And it is his *now* in the way God has provided. The distinctions are precise and consistent but are often confused.

4. BOTH ETERNAL LIFE AND IMMORTALITY CENTER IN CHRIST.—As with Immortality, so with eternal life for man, it likewise centers exclusively in the Person of Jesus Christ our Lord—incarnate, sinless, crucified, risen, ascended, ministering, and coming again as inerrant Judge and eternal King. He, and He alone, is its source and spring. Man forfeited eternal life through sin, but it is offered to him anew by God through Christ, as a future eternal inheritance for the "world to come." But more than that, it is assured *now* through regeneration, and possessed *now* in Christ, then to be enjoyed in immortalized realization through resurrection or translation at the Advent.

Eternal life is therefore much more comprehensive than Immortality, which in time begins for man only at the resurrection. Eternal life is a present possession, as well as being a postresurrection heritage forever. It is positive. It is endless fullness of life, while Immortality is negative, that is, not subject to death and corruption.

5. ETERNAL LIFE BASED ON DUAL RELATIONSHIPS.—Eternal life, then, is something we both have now in Christ and shall receive with new fullness and personalized reality in the world to come (Luke 18:30). This dual relationship must be sustained. We must be, and continue to be, "in Christ," and Christ "in us"—this being our sole "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Christ lives in me, bringing His life and power and victory to bear in my life—my eternal life being vested in Him (Gal. 2:20).

Thus my present eternal life and my future Immortality for eternity are assured as long as this relationship continues. And as the gospel is positive, and eternal life is positive, the term "eternal life" is consequently used by the New Testament

writers much more frequently than "immortality." It is God's over-all offer of life to man. So much for a general statement.

6. SOUND CONCLUSIONS DEDUCIBLE FROM SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE.—Coming now to the detailed examination of the Scripture evidence, we hereafter tabulate three groups of texts that present the scope and reveal the distinctions and relationships between eternal life and Immortality. The first group unfolds the broad, over-all, comprehensive eternal life that characterizes God and Christ, as well as the regenerating life principle implanted in man, in contrast with the immortalized resurrection life for the future. Eternal life for man now, is a present possession that transforms the life that is lived "in Christ," and that assures the resurrection of the believer unto Immortality at the last day.

It is the life that brings full assurance and glorious hope, and that has the inviolable guarantee of God the Eternal, the Immortal One, back of it. Scan the list carefully in order to grasp the sweep of provisions. Sound conclusions will be deducible from this comprehensive Scripture coverage.

New Testament Testimony on "Eternal Life"

Matt. 19:16—"What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life [*zōēn aiōnion*]?"

Matt. 25:46—"The righteous ["shall go"] into life eternal."

Mark 10:17—"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Mark 10:30—"Receive an hundredfold now . . . ; and in the world to come eternal life."

Luke 10:25—"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Luke 18:18—"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Luke 18:30—"In the world to come life everlasting."

John 3:15—"Not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16—"Not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 4:14—"Springing up into everlasting life."

John 4:36—"Gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

John 6:27—"Labour . . . for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

John 6:40—"Every one which . . . believeth . . . may have everlasting life."

John 12:25—"Shall keep it [his life] unto life eternal."

John 12:50—"His commandment is *life everlasting*."

John 17:2—"He *should give eternal life* to as many as thou hast given him."

John 17:3—"This is *life eternal, that they might know thee*."

Acts 13:46—"Ye . . . judge yourselves [the Israelites] unworthy of *everlasting life*, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

Acts 13:48—"As many [Gentiles] as were *ordained to eternal life* believed."

Rom. 2:7—"Seek for glory and honour and immortality, *eternal life*."

Rom. 5:21—"Through righteousness *unto eternal life* by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Rom. 6:22—"And the *end everlasting life*."

Rom. 6:23—"The *gift of God is eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Gal. 6:8—"Shall of the Spirit *reap life everlasting*."

1 Tim. 1:16—"Should hereafter believe on him to *life everlasting*."

1 Tim. 6:12—"Lay hold on *eternal life*, whereunto thou art also called."

1 Tim. 6:19—"That they may *lay hold on eternal life*."

Titus 1:2—"In *hope of eternal life* . . . , promised before the world began."

Titus 3:7—"Heirs according to the *hope of eternal life*."

1 John 1:2—"That *eternal life* [the Word], which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

1 John 2:25—"This is the promise that he hath *promised us, even eternal life*."

1 John 5:20—"This [Jesus Christ] is the true God, and *eternal life*."

Jude 21—"Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ *unto eternal life*."

Note the qualifiers: "May have," "shall go into," "may inherit," "in the world to come," "springing up into," "unto," "should give," "unworthy of," "ordained to," "seek for," the "end" resultant, "reap," "lay hold on," "in hope of," "manifested unto," and "promised." That is the *conditional, or contingent*, side. It is expressly *not* innate, natural, inherent, nor automatically possessed.

V. Eternal Life—Present Possession, but in Christ

Now look at a second tabulation of texts, at first possibly in seeming conflict with the previous listing, yet upon closer examination found to be in complete harmony therewith and

explanatory thereof. Only the *believer* has eternal life, and he has it *now*, and *is passed from death to life*. And because he has eternal life now, Christ will raise him up at the last day and bestow Immortality, or deathlessness, upon him at His second advent, and resurrection or translation. That is the time of immortalization.

But eternal life is contingent upon believing on Christ, receiving Christ, abiding in Christ, experiencing the new birth, and maintaining the "in Christ" position. No unregenerate sinner has eternal life, and no one who breaks off the living fellowship with Christ retains eternal life. Here is the Biblical documentation in nine passages, all in the apostle John's writings.

John 3:36—"He that *believeth* on the Son *hath everlasting life*."

John 5:24—"He that . . . *believeth* . . . *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but *is passed* from death unto *life*."

John 6:47—"He that *believeth* on me *hath everlasting life*."

John 6:54—"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, *hath eternal life*; and *I will raise him up at the last day*."

John 10:28—"I *give* unto them ["my sheep"] *eternal life*."

1 John 3:15—"No *murderer hath eternal life* abiding in him."

1 John 5:11—"God *hath given* to us *eternal life*, and *this life is in his Son*."

1 John 5:12—"He that hath the Son *hath life*; and he that hath not the Son of God *hath not life*."

1 John 5:13—"That ye may know that ye *have eternal life*."

Note the conditions in the light of these texts: Present possession is contingent upon *believing*, and continued believing, on the Son, and thus one passes from the realm of death unto life. Having eternal life is contingent upon living union with Christ, and such recipients will be raised up for the bestowal of Immortality at the resurrection. Eternal life is a gift, but only God's "sheep" have eternal life; no unrepentant "murderer" (or sinner) has eternal life. But most important of all, God has given us this eternal life *in His Son*. Eternal life is consequently dependent upon *believing*, *having*, and *abiding* in the Son. That is the simple but complete story of Holy Writ.

VI. Immortality—God's Alone, Man's to "Put On" at Advent

As already observed, absolute, ultimate Immortality is God's only. Mortal man must "seek" for it, must "put it on," must find it in the gospel promises and God's enabling acts. It is not his presently, nor his naturally, inherently, innately, or independently. It is conditional, contingent, and still future—received at and retained after the resurrection-translation.

But it is ours in promise and provision. Note the six pertinent texts sustaining these statements of relationship to the one and only innately Immortal One, whose light no man can approach unto—unless he presumptuously claims immortality on the basis of tradition, based in turn at the beginning on Satan's original lie in Eden (Gen. 3:4; John 8:44).

Rom. 2:7—"Seek for glory and honour and *immortality*."

1 Cor. 15:53—"This mortal must *put on immortality*."

1 Cor. 15:54—"When . . . this mortal shall have *put on immortality*."

2 Tim. 1:10—"Hath brought life and *immortality to light through the gospel*."

1 Tim. 1:17—"Now unto the King eternal, *immortal*, invisible, the only wise God."

1 Tim. 6:15, 16—"The King of kings, and Lord of lords; *who only hath immortality*, dwelling in the light *which no man can approach unto*."

VII. Basic Twofold Provision-Condition of Eternal Life

It is essential that we grasp the revealed twofold basis for eternal life, which is ours here and now, in a special and specified sense. Let us look at one facet of this scintillating gem of truth: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1).

But to this "in Christ" aspect Paul immediately adds the converse side of this dual relationship—if "the Spirit of God *dwell in you*" (v. 9). And he immediately repeats this aspect by stressing plainly, "If Christ be *in you*, . . . the Spirit is life" (v. 10). That is unequivocal. Then comes this consequence and climax:



FREDERICK SHIELDS, ARTIST

Lazarus, Raised by Christ From the Sleep of Death, Still Bound With Graveclothes, Attested the Omnipotent Power of the Life-giver.

“If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead *dwelt in you*, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall *also quicken your mortal bodies*” (v. 11).

We are thus led up to our “change,” or “quickenings,” at the resurrection. But Paul explains our present relationship even more explicitly:

“I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*: and the life which I now live in the flesh *I live by the faith of the Son of God*, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

It is therefore both *His* life within us and *His* faith that are effective. That is the provision and the guarantee of our safety and triumph. Jesus likewise set forth the same twofold relationship in these words:

“He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood [receiving and assimilating Christ in the life], *dwelleth in me, and I in him*” (John 6:56).

That twofold integration is identical in intent with His previous statement:

“That every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth on him*, may have everlasting life: and *I will raise him up at the last day*” (v. 40).

There we have it: eternal life now; and Immortality at the Second Advent. That is God's gracious plan and wondrous provision.

1. SIMILAR TO CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE FATHER.—This life, integrated with the life of Christ, is much the same relationship as that between Christ and the Father when Christ was on earth as a man among mortal men, subject to death. This He presented in these words: "I am *in the Father*, and the *Father in me*" (John 14:11). And He added, "The Father *that dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works" (v. 10). That was the basis of Christ's triumphant life. So Christ says assuringly to the believer, "*We [Christ and the Father] will come unto him [the believer], and make our abode with him*" (v. 23). Then He adds one further provision: "Ye shall know that *I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you*" (v. 20).

That becomes an invincible threefold union. Never are we to forget that Christ is operatively present in us through the Holy Spirit. "For he [the Holy Spirit] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you*" (vs. 17, 18). And our eternal life is safe in Him. There is no occasion for failure. That is why and how our eternal life, vested in Christ, is ours now and here—with immortalization to follow.

2. LIFE OF GOD IMPLANTED THROUGH NEW BIRTH.—One further point needs to be remembered. *Eternal life* is the life of God, revealed in and through Christ, who is God (John 1:4; 5:26; 1 John 1:1, 2). This life of God is implanted in the believer through the new birth (John 3:3-15; Gal. 6:15). And it is through this new birth that the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature and a recipient of the life of Christ Himself (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:10; 4:24; Col. 1:27; 1 Peter 1:23, 25; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 5:10-12). This is not a mere reformation or rejuvenation of the old nature, but the creative act of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12, 13; 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17). But it cannot be overemphasized that this life remains *vested in Christ*,

and its operation *in us* is dependent upon our being *in Him*:

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, *and this life is in his Son*. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye *have eternal life*" (1 John 5:11-13).

This is the living, vitalizing relationship of the heavenly Vine and the human branches (John 15:1-6).

VIII. Believers Predestined Heirs of Eternal Life Hereafter

But let us turn the gem and observe the light flashing from another facet. Believers are declared to be both "sons" and "heirs." Paul says, "If children, then *heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs*³ with Christ; . . . that we may be also *glorified together*" (Rom. 8:17). Our heirship is therefore tied in with our relation to Christ. But the "earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation [apokalupsin, "unveiling," "revealing," "appearing"] of the sons of God*" (v. 19), "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption of our body*" (v. 23), as we come to our full estate as sons. Our change, or immortalization, is therefore involved.

"For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did *predestinate* [from *proōrisen*, "decree or ordain beforehand"] to be *conformed to the image of his Son*" (v. 29).

Foreknowing therefore precedes predestinating, and predestinating precedes historical fulfillment. Transformation, or glorification, at the Second Advent is our destined goal.

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, *them he also glorified*" (v. 30).

That is the inexorable logic of the sequence and the glorious outcome in God's plan and provision of redemption.

I. ALREADY HEIRS, AWAITING TIME OF POSSESSION.—Pursuing this point further, Paul gives assurance that "if ye be

³ Cf. Eph. 3:6 ("fellowheirs"); Heb. 11:9; 1 Peter 3:7.

Christ's, then are ye . . . *heirs* according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). But he immediately adds this qualifying factor:

"That the *heir*, as long as he is a *child* [a minor under age], differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all" (Gal. 4:1)—"until the time appointed of the father" (v. 2).

He does not actually come into his inheritance until he is of age. So each child of God is a "son," and "*heir* of God through Christ" (v. 7). We are "*heirs* of salvation" (Heb. 1:14), "*heirs* of promise" (Heb. 6:17). (And James adds, that we are "*heirs* of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him"—James 2:5.) But we have not yet reached the day of maturity. The apostle crystallizes and completes this entire "*heir*" line of reasoning by declaring that we shall "be made *heirs* according to the *hope of eternal life*" (Titus 3:7).

That is the grand objective—to receive eternal life in its fullness, under God's enabling act, *in the time and the way of His appointment*.

2. PROLEPTIC FIGURE EMPLOYED RE "ETERNAL LIFE."—God often employs the proleptic figure of calling "those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17)—things designed and destined to take place in the future—referring to them as though they were already accomplished. For example, Paul says that Christ "*hath* abolished death" (2 Tim. 1:10)—yet death is still actively operative, and will continue to be until Christ's return. But its end is assured. Or, John's "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and *have* washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14)—yet these Christian martyrs were not as yet born. Thus also with the wondrous provision of *eternal life*:

"This is the record, that God *hath given* to us *eternal life*, and *this life is in his Son*. He that hath the Son *hath* life; and he that hath not the Son of God *hath not* life" (1 John 5:11, 12; the "gift of God," Rom. 6:23).

Everything, then, depends upon and is determined by, that unique relationship.

3. **ETERNAL LIFE VESTED IN CHRIST, NOT IN US.**—This *eternal life* is not in us intrinsically, but is vested and preserved in Christ. It is safe and it is sure, and it is ours—in *Him*, when He dwells in us. It is thus that we have it. That is the divine safeguard and assurance. We have title but not yet possession. He that “*endureth to the end shall be saved*” (Matt. 10: 22). On the contrary, “If a man *abide not* in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered” (John 15:6). But we have this immutable assurance:

“This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth* on him, *may have everlasting life* [*zōēn aiōnion*]; and *I will raise him up at the last day*” (John 6:40). ✓

That is the relationship of eternal life to Immortality at the resurrection. It is the inevitable outgrowth of eternal life now, in Christ.

Paul himself thus lived “in *hope of eternal life*, which God, that cannot lie, *promised* before the world began” (Titus 1:2; cf. 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4). Eternal life is still in trust in Christ. This is “the *promise of life which is in Christ Jesus*” (2 Tim. 1:1). Again, “This is the *promise* that he hath promised us, *even eternal life*” (1 John 2:25). It is as sure as the Word and as certain as the integrity of God. It is ours now in Christ, when He is in us. That is God’s provision. It is infinitely more safe and secure than if given outright to us.

4. **MINOR HEIR DOES NOT HAVE POSSESSION UNTIL OF AGE.**—Thus the one who abides in Christ can truthfully say that he “*hath everlasting life*,” for Christ is the embodiment, the source, the personification of life—both the life and resurrection (John 5:24-29; 11:25; 14:6). But Paul specifies, “Your *life is hid* [laid up, hidden away in store] with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). No one can deprive us of it (John 10:28). It is ours, if faithful, just as the heir to an estate (who is still a minor) can say, “The estate is mine!”

But he cannot take personal, tangible possession of it until he is of age, as it were, under the terms and specifications of

his father's will and testament. Eternal life is received in final immortalized form at the resurrection, when we enter upon our full estate. It is thus that we are to understand these precious declarative assurances:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life" (John 6:47).

"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, *hath* eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (v. 54).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life" (chap. 5:24).

There is thus harmony, logic, love, assurance, and the pledged word of the Eternal God, "who only hath immortality," and who has made full provision for us to be clothed with Immortality appropriate for us, at the appointed time—the Second Advent.

Technical Terms: Sleeping, Waking, Resurrection

I. "Sleeping" and "Awakening"—NT Terms for Death and Resurrection

DEFINITION OF TERMS.—Two Greek words are rendered "sleep"—(1) *katheudō* ("to compose one's self in voluntary or natural sleep," as in 1 Thess. 5:6), employed 22 times, and *never used of death*; and (2) *koimaō* ("to fall asleep involuntarily," as in 1 Thess. 4:14). This is used of the *sleep of death* because it is involuntary, while *katheudō* is voluntary. *Koimaō* occurs 18 times, and is *constantly used of death* (except Matt. 28:13; Luke 22:45; John 11:12; Acts 12:6).

1. MULTIPLE SPECULATIONS OVER STATE IN DEATH.—The mystery of man's state in death has frequently been used as a springboard for plunging into philosophic speculation, poetic fancy, superstitious credulity, and religious yearning. Here Immortal-Soulist speculation ranges all the way from Oriental belief in transmigration, Platonic escape to the starry spheres, American Indian happy hunting grounds, Spiritualism's eerie world of progressive spheres, Romanism's Purgatory and limbo, and on to Protestantism's magic gateway to Heaven.

But the human mind, unaided, is baffled by the mystery of the death state. Man craves certainty and solace on this point. Scripture alone pierces the veil and gives us trustworthy information. Only the Bible gives us the true understanding of the intermediate state. Even after three years of personal com-



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The Taking of Elijah to Heaven Prefigured the Translation of the Living Saints at Christ's Second Advent.

panionship with Christ during His earthly ministry, the early apostles still needed the risen Christ to open "their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). We too must likewise listen to His words today. We too as verily need the divine illumination of the Holy Spirit, who will guide us, as He did them, into "all truth" (John 16:13).

2. "SLEEP"—COMMON TERM FOR "DEAD IN CHRIST."—That man "sleeps" between death and the resurrection is the express testimony of Scripture. It is, in fact, the uniform testimony of both the Old and the New Testaments—as for example, with Moses, David, and Daniel in the Old,¹ and Christ, Paul, and Stephen in the New.² Peter expressly said, "David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). *Man sleeps; then he awakens.* That epitomizes his experience, covering the intermediate state between the present life and the life to come.

¹ Deut. 31:16; 1 Kings 1:21; Dan. 12:2.

² John 11:11; Acts 7:59, 60; 1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Thess. 4:15.

The verb *koimaō* ("to make sleep," "put to sleep," "fall asleep," "sleep") not only is generally used of the "sleep of death" but is affirmed to be the condition of *man as a whole* in death (cf. Deut. 31:16—"thou shalt *sleep* with thy fathers"). Death is affirmed to be an unbroken slumber until the resurrection morn, when the sleepers will awaken (Dan. 12:2). Jesus said of Lazarus, "I go, that I may awake *him* out of *sleep*" (John 11:11). And when "*he* that was dead" was awakened, he came forth bodily from the tomb (v. 44). And Jesus said, "Loose *him* [from the "graveclothes"], and let *him* go" (v. 44).

Moreover, Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4 assures us that neither those who are alive at the return of Christ nor those who "sleep in Jesus," will go into the Lord's presence before the other group. Both the resurrected and the translated ones are "caught up *together*" to meet their returning Lord. Such a declaration confutes the concept that the dead saints have gone before to glory, and have been with Christ for centuries, or millenniums. Neither the "quick" ("the living") nor the "dead" precede the other, but the "changed" *quick* and the awakened *sleepers* will go "together" into the presence of Jesus forever (vs. 15-17).

3. FIGURE OF "SLEEP" USED ONLY OF FIRST DEATH.—There is a striking similarity between the beautiful euphemism of the "sleep" of the *dead* and the "sleep" of the *living*. Both indicate a condition of unconsciousness and inactivity, which concept is, of course, totally opposed to the popular postulate of the superlative consciousness and activity of allegedly immortal souls. But the Bible must be the criterion on this. Neither tradition nor speculation nor human aspiration can be trusted for reliable information here.

There is also a striking similarity in the awakening that follows. In literal sleep the person who sleeps wakes up after his rest. There is thus the suggestion of a resurrection. But the Scriptures are explicit just here. The dead do awaken. Those who "sleep the sleep of death" (Ps. 13:3) are not to remain in

the death-sleep forever. Both good and evil "sleep," and both righteous and wicked must assuredly "awake" (Dan. 12:2). For "as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

But the figure of sleep is used only of the *first*, or temporal, death. When we lie down in the "sleep of death," the next thing of which we are conscious is that of being awakened by Jesus, the declared "resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25), to live forever or to be judicially condemned to the *second*, or eternal, death, from which there will be no awakening.

4. UNIFORM USAGE DETERMINES THE MEANING.—To grasp the New Testament usage at a glance, let the eye run down the italicized words in the following list of passages, and observe the frequency and consistency with which the terms "sleepeth," "sleep," "asleep," and "slept"—all variants of *koimaō*—are used for the *sleep of death* in the New Testament, paralleling the same usage throughout the Old Testament.³ This New Testament terminology is used particularly of those who sleep "in Christ" (1 Cor. 15:18), or "in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:14).

Matt. 9:24, 25—"The maid is not dead, but *sleepeth*. . . . And the maid arose."

Matt. 27:52—"Many bodies of the saints which *slept* arose."

Mark 5:39—"The damsel is not dead, but *sleepeth*."

Luke 8:52, 53—"She is not dead, but *sleepeth*. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead."

John 11:11—"Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*; but I go, that I may awake him out of *sleep*."

Acts 7:60—"He [Stephen] fell *asleep*."

Acts 13:36—"David . . . fell on *sleep*."

1 Cor. 7:39—"If the husband have fallen *asleep* [*koimaō*]" (Rotherham tr.).

1 Cor. 11:30—"And many *sleep*."

1 Cor. 15:6—"Some are fallen *asleep*."

1 Cor. 15:18—"They also which are fallen *asleep* in Christ."⁴

³ Such as Job, "For now shall I *sleep* in the dust" (Job 7:21), or David, "Lest I *sleep* the *sleep* of death" (Ps. 13:3), or "David *slept* with his fathers" (1 Kings 2:10), or "Many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Dan. 12:2). For Old Testament list see pp. 81, 82.

⁴ "In Christ" we have reconciliation, salvation, access, hope, peace, sonship, victory, safety, and *resurrection*. (See Rom. 5:1, 2, 10; 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57; Eph. 1:5; Col. 1:20; Titus 3:5, 6.)

1 Cor. 15:20—"Christ [is] risen from the dead, . . . the firstfruits of them that *slept*."

1 Cor. 15:51—"We shall not all *sleep*, but we shall all be changed."

1 Thess. 4:13—"Concerning them which are *asleep*, that ye sorrow not, even as others."

1 Thess. 4:14—"Them also which *sleep* in Jesus."⁵

1 Thess. 4:15—"Not prevent [*phthanō*, "go before, or precede"] them which are *asleep*."

1 Thess. 5:10—"Whether we wake or *sleep*, we should live together with him."

2 Peter 3:4—"Since the fathers fell *asleep*."

It will be observed that these references include the great resurrection chapters, 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4.

It is to be particularly noted that "sleep" is used *both of the good and of the evil dead*. It is similarly to be observed that *koimaō* to describe the dead was likewise used by the pagan ancients to describe the dead—but *without hope of a resurrection or an awakening*. By them it was joined with words that excluded the hope of "waking," or with such qualifiers as "eternal," "unawakened," or "everlasting," or "brazen" or "iron" sleep. The contrast is impressive. The Christian hope of glorious *awakening* made the difference.

5. "SLEEP" IMPLIES ASSURANCE OF "AWAKENING."—Sleep is a tender and hope-inspiring figure of speech, chosen by Inspiration to represent death; for, as noted, sleep implies assurance of a later awakening. The *literal* use of the term "sleep" is, of course, limited to *living* persons, while in *figurative* use it pertains only to the *dead*. It was employed by Christ Himself in preference to the harsher literal term "death," with its inevitable "sting" (1 Cor. 15:56).

Speaking figuratively, Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*; but I go, that I may *awake* him out of *sleep*" (John 11:11). However, when Jesus perceived that He was misunderstood, He said "unto them *plainly*, Lazarus is *dead*" (v. 14). And He quickly added, "Thy brother shall *rise again*" (v. 23). Both sets of expressions meant the same.

⁵ Equated with the "dead in Christ" in v. 16.

When Paul speaks figuratively of those who "*sleep* in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:14), he explains this as literally "the *dead* in Christ" (v. 16). The term "sleep" softens the impact of the blow by reminding one of its temporary character and the assured awakening to follow. It is a euphemism—a gentle, comforting word substituted for the harsher, more repellent term. Now note the technical term.

6. "AWAKENING" FROM DEATH-SLEEP IS INSPIRED TERMINOLOGY.—To "awake" (*exupnizō*, "to rouse out of sleep") is Biblically and logically the reverse of "falling asleep" in death. They are antithetical terms in striking contrast. The classic New Testament example of the use and meaning of the term "awake" is in connection with the aforementioned raising of Lazarus. Observe the entire passage:

"Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth* [from *koimaō*]; but I go, that I may awake [from *exupnizō*, "arouse"] him out of *sleep*. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is *dead*" (John 11:11-14).

The resurrection followed, as Christ came to the grave and called, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was *dead* *came forth*" (vs. 43, 44). That was the "*awakening*" of Lazarus out of the "*sleep*" of verse 11. The meaning is identical. Christ said nothing about Lazarus having gone to Heaven, and that He was going to bring him back from glory. He simply inquired where they had laid him. And when Lazarus came forth he did not report having seen anything in the nether world.

The last-day parallel is, of course, that the sleeping dead shall both *hear and respond* to the voice of the returning Christ, the Life-giver, and shall arise at that transcendent hour.⁹ Observe:

⁹ In the Old Testament are numerous examples of paralleling usage:
 Job 14:12—"Till the heavens be no more, they shall not *awake*, nor be raised out of their sleep."
 Ps. 17:15—"I shall be satisfied, when I *awake*, with thy likeness."
 Isa. 26:19—"Thy dead men shall live. . . . *Awake* and sing, ye that dwell in dust."
 Jer. 51:39, 57—"Sleep a perpetual sleep, and not *wake*."
 Dan. 12:2—"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall *awake*."

Christ's Ascension Was the Assurance of Our Complete Bodily Redemption and the Pledge of His Return to Gather His Ransomed Ones From Death and the Grave.



G. BIERMAN, ARTIST

John 5:25—"The dead shall *hear* the voice of the Son of God: and they that *hear* shall live."

John 5:28, 29—"All that are in the graves shall *hear* his voice, and shall come forth."

1 Thess. 4:16—"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a *shout*, . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise."

There is thus harmony and symmetry of expression as to "sleeping" and "awaking"—Bible terms for going into and coming out of the death state.

7. TRANSLATION CONCEALS REITERATED "AWAKENING" EMPHASIS.—Another but more technical point may well be noted, pertaining to translation. Some sixteen times in 1 Co-

rinthians 15 the resurrection "awakening" from the "sleep" of death is pressed home by the apostle Paul. First of all, as a background he says that Christ "died for our sins" and was "buried," and "rose [from *egeirō*, "awoke," "roused up from sleep"—the sleep of death] again the third day according to the scriptures" (vs. 3, 4). Then He was seen by Peter, next by the twelve, then by more than five hundred at one time—most of whom were still living when he wrote (about A.D. 57), but "some are *fallen asleep*"—then seen by James and by all the apostles (vs. 5-7). Finally He was seen by Paul himself (v. 8).

Now note how, ten times in eight verses (12-20), Paul in the original Greek stresses the resurrection as "awaking" (from *egeirō*) from the dead—including that of Christ Himself. Observe:

"Now if Christ be preached that he *rose* ["awakened"] from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection ["rising up"] of the dead? But if there be no *resurrection* of the dead, then is Christ not *risen* ["awakened"]; and if Christ be not *risen* ["awakened"], then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he *raised up* ["awakened"] Christ: whom he *raised* ["awakened"] not up, if so be that the dead *rise* ["wake"] not. For if the dead *rise* ["awaken"] not, then is not Christ *raised* ["awakened"]; and if Christ be not *raised* ["awakened"], your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are *fallen asleep* [from *koimaō*] in Christ are perished" (vs. 12-18).

"But now is Christ *risen* ["awakened"] from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that *slept* [from *koimaō*]" (v. 20).

This iterated and reiterated contrast between sleeping and awakening is impressive. And in five additional instances *egeirō* ("awaken") occurs (1 Cor. 15:32, 35, 42, 43, and 52).⁷ The term "sleep" enshrines a blessed truth and Biblical fact, for the sleeper is unconscious of any lapse of time between death and resurrection. He simply goes to sleep and later awakes,⁸ in the resurrection of the dead.

⁷ v. 32—"What advantageth it me, if the dead *rise* ["awaken"] not?"

v. 35—"How are the dead *raised up*?"

v. 42—"It is *raised* in incorruption."

v. 43—"It is *raised* in glory."

v. 52—"The dead shall be *raised* incorruptible."

⁸ Other examples of *egeirō* occur: Matthew 8:25—"His disciples came to him, and *awoke* him"; Ephesians 5:14—"Awake thou that sleepest, and *arise* from the dead"; Romans 13:11—"Now it is high time to *awake* out of sleep."

8. BEARS VITAL RELATIONSHIP TO ADVENT HOPE.—Christ must come again in order to receive His people unto Himself (John 14:3) and to reunite those separated by death. In this light the Second Advent becomes luminous as the blessed hope of the church. The sole means of meeting and reuniting with our loved ones is the return of Jesus to awaken them, or raise them up, from sleep in their dusty beds. The fact that death has been popularly regarded as the immediate gateway to Paradise is largely responsible for relegating so far into the background the New Testament doctrine of our Lord's return. And it has blurred the resurrection truth. The time has come to give again our Lord's return its rightful, paramount place in the preaching of the gospel.

II. Two Separate General Resurrections—of Righteous and Wicked

There are two verbs and two nouns, respectively, for "resurrect" and "resurrection." The two *verbs* are: (1) *anistēmi* ("to stand up," "to raise up," "to rise up," "to arise or rise again"), occurring 111 times, 35 of which refer to resurrection (for example: Matt. 17:9; 20:19; John 6:39, 40, 44, 54); and (2) *egeirō* ("to rouse up from sleep," "to awaken"), occurring 141 times, 70 of which refer to resurrection (for example: Matt. 10:8; 27:63, 64; Luke 20:37; 24:6, 34; John 12:1, 9, 17; Eph. 1:20; 5:14; etc.).

The two *nouns* are: (1) *anastasis* ("a standing up," or "rising as from the dead"), occurring 42 times, always translated resurrection (except Luke 2:34); and (2) *egersis* ("a waking up as from sleep," "a rousing from sleep," because death is a sleep), as in Matthew 27:53.

1. TWO GENERAL RESURRECTIONS FOLLOW IN SEQUENCE.—According to Scripture, after Christ's resurrection as the "first-fruits," two general resurrections are to follow in sequence. First note the Scripture:

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own *order*: Christ the firstfruits; *afterward* they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the *end*" (1 Cor. 15:22-24).

(1) The initial resurrection is that of "Christ the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:23; Acts 26:23). His tremendous, matchless resurrection provides the sole basis and assurance of the resurrection of all men (1 Cor. 15:16-20), and suggests the nature of the change that will come to our bodies.

(2) Then "afterward they that are Christ's at his [second] coming" (v. 23). This is called the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5, 6), the "*better* resurrection" (Heb. 11:35), the "*resurrection of life*" (John 5:29; Dan. 12:2), and the "*resurrection of the just*" (Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15). Those who partake in it are called "blessed and holy" (Rev. 20:6), for they will not be hurt of the "*second* death." They are "children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:35, 36).⁹

(3) Finally come the "rest of the dead"—those that "lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5). So, beyond the "first" resurrection looms the "second." This presupposes that the "rest of the dead" (the wicked) were not living during the thousand years. This comprises the resurrection of the *unjust* (Acts 24:15), the "*resurrection of damnation*" (John 5:29), the resurrection to "*shame and everlasting contempt*" (Dan. 12:2). It is the antithesis of the *first* resurrection. These compass the general resurrections. And those who came up in the second are, after judgment, cast into the "lake of fire," which is the *second* death (Rev. 20:6, 12-15).

2. RESURRECTION UNIVERSAL IN OPERATION.—So the resurrection is universal in its operation—"all [shall] be made alive," just as verily as "*all* die" (1 Cor. 15:22). All men must and will be raised to acknowledge the lordship of Christ (Rom. 14:10, 11). To those who acknowledge that lordship *now*, in this life, there is salvation (chap. 10:9). To those who acknowledge it too late—as a constraint, after the second resurrection—there is only destruction. But that lordship will one day be

⁹ Bullinger, *Lexicon*, "Resurrection," pp. 643, 644.

acknowledged by all (Phil. 2:9-11; cf. Rev. 19:16), one way or the other.

We must therefore conclude that the general term "resurrection of the dead" (*anastasis nekrōn*) includes both the resurrection unto "life" for the just and the resurrection to judgment of the unjust (John 5:29; Acts 24:15).

3. DRAMA OF REBELLION, SIN, AND DEATH OVER.—The resurrections now past, the Inspired Record adds, "Then cometh the end, . . . when he shall have *put down* [from *katargeō*, "render inactive," "abolish," "cause to cease," "bring to nought"] all *rule* and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). Rebellion is subdued. All opposing powers are destroyed, abolished (Rom. 6:6; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 2:14). Then, significantly, Paul immediately adds, "The last enemy that shall be *destroyed* is death" (1 Cor. 15:26).

Thus the supreme purpose of Christ's incarnation mission is fulfilled, for He came that He might "destroy him that had the *power of death*, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). These "principalities and powers" and "rulers of the darkness" and spiritual hosts of *wickedness* are *consumed* by the "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). Thus the abolition of death is the last act in the divine drama of the ages (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 20:14). Sin and sinners, death and devil, are gone forever. The drama of time is over. God is all in all. Eternal life in the new earth begins, with the saints restored and safe forevermore.

III. Glory of Our Immortalized Resurrection Bodies

1. RESURRECTION OF BODY INDISPENSABLE TO FUTURE LIFE.—According to the New Testament, a bodily resurrection is indispensable to our future Immortality. Paul declares that without such a consummation of God's redemptive purpose, "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*" (1 Cor. 15:16-18). There would be no restoration of the person.

So the resurrection body is involved in the promised gift of immortal life, bestowed at the Advent. "This mortal *must put on* immortality" (v. 53)—something it had not before possessed. It is a bodily resurrection that gives reality and substance to our forthcoming immortal life. (The thought of discarnate immortal souls is wholly un-Biblical. Shades, floating about in mystic aerial regions, are totally foreign to Holy Writ. Such a notion stems from Greek philosophy.)

The human personality requires a resurrection body as an instrument for further life, thought, and activity. That is an integral part of the change, or quickening (Rom. 8:11) process, a resurrection-translation act of God, to take place at the Second Advent. The record is clear: "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:14). His was an actual bodily resurrection, albeit with a glorified body. But this involves the *quicken*ing of our mortal bodies. And this too is imperative but conditional:

"If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also *quicken* [from *zōopoieō*, "to make alive," "give life," especially eternal life] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11).

This relationship between the *present mortal body* and the *future glorified body* is highly important. It is sown in "dishonour" and "weakness," and raised in "glory" and "power" (1 Cor. 15:43). Here is the inspired description:

"It [the body] is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: . . . it is sown a *natural* body; it is raised a *spiritual* body." "To every seed *his own body*" (vs. 42-44, 38).

This latter expression cannot be overemphasized. Identity and personality will be preserved.

2. CONTINUITY OF IDENTITY AND PERSONALITY PRESERVED.

—This does not mean that the same identical particles of matter at the moment of death will reunite to form the same body in the resurrection. There is a progressive change of bodily structure throughout our present life. But the same essential organization is maintained in the provision of God, and the

same *personality* is preserved without change. The body of the resurrection will maintain the same recognizable pattern and personality.

Even the identity of the same Rhine or Mississippi, the Nile, Hudson, or Amazon, remains despite the passage of thousands of years. Not a drop of water now flowing is identical with the river that flowed at the time of its discovery, yet it is the identical, recognizable river. This, of course, is a crude illustration, but it affords a suggestion.

Further, Paul's reference to the body as the "seed," suggests some sort of vital connection—the future counterpart and the seed from which it springs. There is identity, but not a physical connection in the sense that the stalk is built directly from the structure of the seed. "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but *bare grain*" (1 Cor. 15:37). There is continuing personal identity, the continuing core of personality. However, the death of the seed is involved—"That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die" (v. 36). Christ touches on this same thought: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Then comes His explanation: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto *life eternal*" (v. 25).

As noted, though the physical form of man is constantly changing and being renewed throughout this life, he continues to be the *same person*—as the new materials are organized and integrated into the same continuing body. We are able to identify the child we knew with the man we now see.

3. RESURRECTION BODIES TO BE VASTLY DIFFERENT.—As to the precise nature of the resurrection bodies—"How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" (1 Cor. 15:35)—the answer is not revealed. John says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). There were

quibblers in apostolic days as in ours. These Paul rebuked.¹⁰

Whatever the exact connection between our present mortal bodies and our resurrection bodies, we know that they will be vastly different. There will be a tremendous "change" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52), as Paul twice emphasizes. All infirmities and defects and earthly limitations will vanish. In Old Testament times Job was waiting until his "change" should come (Job 14:14).

As stated, the precise nature of that change has not been revealed. It is beyond our present knowledge and comprehension. It is a "spiritual body" in contrast with our present "natural body." Paul compares it with a bare kernel of wheat planted in the ground and the sturdy stalk that comes from it. In the glory of the resurrection body the contrast is between mortality and corruption, and Immortality and incorruption. Christ's risen body, with its exemption from the previous laws of time, space, and movement, suggests the nature of the change, or contrast. But we must leave it there.

4. "SPIRITUAL BODIES" PERFECTLY ADAPTED TO RESURRECTION LIFE.—Paul assures us that Christ will "fashion anew the *body of our humiliation*, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21, A.R.V.). He presses on the tremendous "change" (1 Cor. 15:50, 51) that will take place, and compares our present and future bodies as being that of "bodies terrestrial" and "celestial bodies" (v. 40). He makes the contrast between the pale, dim "glory of the moon" and the brilliant, vitalizing "glory of the sun" (v. 41). And he adds, "So also is the resurrection of the dead" (v. 42).

He contrasts the "image of the earthy" with the "image of the heavenly," and the "bare grain" with the "body that shall be" (1 Cor. 15:37-49). The contrast is between "dishonour" and "glory," and "weakness" and "power." Paul categorically

¹⁰ Paul invoked unusually strong language in dealing with quibblers on this point, employing the term "fool" (*aphrōn*, "without mind," "senseless," "destitute of sound principle"). He was a bit impatient with valueless, hypothetical questions. Christ also twice used the same term in Luke 11:40 and 12:20 in dealing with the hypocritical Pharisees—"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

declares, "There is a *natural body* [for this life], and there is a *spiritual body*" (v. 44), for the life to come. "As we have borne the *image of the earthy*, we shall also bear the *image of the heavenly*" (v. 49). He does not define or explain the spiritual body. But this we do know: This present, earthly "flesh and blood" body "*cannot inherit* the kingdom of God" (v. 50), any more than corruption can "inherit" incorruption.

Of this we may be sure: The "spiritual body" will be perfectly adapted to the plane of the resurrection or immortal life to come. And the earthly limitations of corruption and mortality will be *put off* forever. And what we "*put on*" is a "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). That is the source of the resurrection body, and its glorified character. Death and disintegration will be vanquished forevermore. And all this is through Christ Jesus. For "when Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him *in glory*" (Col. 3:4).

IV. Many in Heaven Through Special Resurrection or Translation

I. ENOCH, MOSES, AND ELIJAH ARE EARLIEST TROPHIES. —The Bible explicitly states that a host of redeemed worthies from this earth are already in Heaven. But this is to be particularly noted: All the immortalized from earth who are there have gone by way of one of two undeviating channels—*special resurrection* or *translation*. There are no exceptions. These are the only corridors to glory, the sole gateways to Heaven. One group passed through death, and was raised immortal and incorruptible; the other escaped death through bodily transformation and translation to glory.

Take the earliest example of translation. "Enoch, the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14), was the first representative of the human race to be *translated*. He was "changed," transformed, immortalized, and taken to Heaven in his glorified





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translation body, as the earliest trophy of redemption. He thus became a type of the living righteous who will be “*changed*,” and “*caught up*” at Christ’s second coming. Here is the inspired account:

“By faith Enoch was *translated* [from *metatithēmi*, “transported”] that he *should not see death*; and was not found, because God had *translated him*” (Heb. 11:5).

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Because He Rose Triumphant Over Death, We Too Shall Come Forth From the Grave at the Impending Second Advent.

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Moses, on the other hand, was the first to be resurrected from the dead by a *special resurrection*. Thus, "death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5:14). He "died" and was "buried" (Deut. 34:5, 6). Just when his resurrection occurred we do not know. But there was a futile challenge by Satan over the right of Michael, the Archangel, to bring Moses forth from the grave (Jude 9). Reverting again to translation, Elijah was more spectacularly *translated*, as he was taken up to Heaven by a "chariot of fire," evidently transported by angels (Ps. 104:4). Here again is the inspired record:

"And it came to pass, as they [Elijah and Elisha] still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and *parted them both asunder*; and *Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven*" (2 Kings 2:11; cf. 6:17).

Elisha witnessed it and cried, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him [Elijah] no more" (chap. 2:12). These "chariots" are evidently connected with the angels: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels" (Ps. 68:17).

2. GLORIFIED MOSES AND ELIJAH APPEAR AT TRANSFIGURATION.—At the Transfiguration, witnessed by Peter, James, and John, there appeared with the "transfigured" Christ, "Moses and Elias talking with him" (Matt. 17:1-8). That is very specific. Then, after they had conversed concerning Christ's coming death and resurrection, Moses and Elias disappeared, and the disciples "saw no man, save Jesus only" (v. 8). They were overwhelmed by what they had seen. But Jesus charged them to tell no man "until the Son of man be risen again from the dead" (v. 9; cf. Mark 9:4-10). It was this experience that caused the disciples to discuss among themselves just "what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark 9:10). Light was dawning upon their comprehension.

According to Luke, at the Transfiguration "the fashion of his [Christ's] countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening" (Luke 9:29). Then these "two men, which

were Moses and Elias," similarly "appeared in glory, and spake of his [Christ's] decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (v. 31). There was no mistaking their identity. They were clearly the illustrious characters of Bible fame—prototypes of the resurrected and translated saints. This, of course, involves belief in the supernatural, life-giving power of God. And this we affirm.

3. SPECIAL RESURRECTION AT CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.—

There was also a singular resurrection of "saints" who had been sleeping in death, which occurred in connection with earth-quaking phenomena attending the death and *resurrection* of Jesus, when—

"the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the *graves were opened*; and *many bodies of the saints which slept arose*, and came out of the graves after his [Christ's] resurrection, and went into the holy city [Jerusalem], and appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:51-53; cf. Rom. 1:4).

These glorified risen saints were perhaps trophies from every age. In any event, they were witnesses to the reality of God's power to raise the dead, and afforded supreme proof of the reality of the resurrection by the very fact that they had been raised—and all this at the very time that the Jewish leaders were seeking desperately to conceal the fact of Christ's resurrection and offering money to the Roman soldiers to lie about His resurrection. But incontrovertible witness was thus given both to the Jews and to Christ's followers. These provided unassailable attestation. They may be classed among the "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3) of Christ's resurrection.

And when Christ ascended He led with Him this "*multitude of captives*" (Eph. 4:8, margin; cf. Ps. 68:17, 18). The chain of death was demonstrably broken. Satan's captives were recaptured by the greater power of Christ, and Christ thus led them up to Heaven in triumphal procession. Thus it was that "having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15).

4. GOD'S STIPULATED WAY FOR IMMORTALIZATION.—Accord-

ing to Paul, the *living* saints will all be "*changed*" ("altered") at Christ's second advent, and will "put on" "incorruption" and "immortality." "Changed" is simply another term for "translation." This involves the transformation and glorification of the body of the living, as verily as with the transfiguring glorification of the resurrected dead. The only difference is that for them there is no antecedent sleep in death. Here is Inspiration's detailed portrayal:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be *changed*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the [righteous] dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [those living at Christ's return] shall be *changed*. For this corruptible must *put on* incorruption, and this mortal must *put on* immortality" (1 Cor. 15:51-53).

There is no other way. This, as emphasized, is God's stipulated plan and provision—*resurrection* or *translation*—both occurring simultaneously for the sleeping and living saints, respectively, so that both groups may be "caught up together" "to meet the Lord in the air," thenceforth ever to "be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17) in the heavenly "mansions" (John 14:2, 3) Christ has gone to "prepare" in the Father's house—the city of God, or New Jerusalem.

5. GENERAL RESURRECTION AND TRANSLATION AT CHRIST'S RETURN.—According to Luke, Christ ascended personally, in His glorified body, into the welcoming clouds and was "carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51). The concurring record in Acts states that He was "taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Thus He was "taken up" from the disciples "into heaven" (v. 11). And they "looked stedfastly toward *heaven* as he went up" (v. 10). His was a real, a literal ascension. And it will be a real, literal return. Upon the authority of the angels, He "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (v. 11).

He will return personally, in the clouds, in the same way: "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7)—only this time in transcendent "power and

great glory" (Matt. 24:30), with a host of mighty angels to "gather together his elect" from the four quarters of the globe (v. 31). So our "gathering" is dependent upon, and synchronized with, His return. Special resurrections and translations are identical in process, only carried out in advance and limited in number.

Terms and Usages: Final Disposition of the Wicked

The fate of the wicked—the unrepentant irreconcilables—is one of the most solemn and tragic aspects in the entire area embracing the nature and destiny of fallen man. It is sobering and disturbing to contemplate. Nevertheless, the justice and integrity of God, as well as His love and mercy (not to mention the lot of the hardened sinner), are inextricably bound up therewith.

We now address ourselves to this crucial question. In the all-wise punitive acts of God, manifest in the final disposition of confirmed sinners, we find His majestic equity and infinite rectitude and righteousness towering above the dreadful misconceptions and fabrications devised by the imaginations of men—travesties that have marred the centuries, first under pagan, then Catholic, and finally under Protestant hands.

I. Multiple Terms Affirm Destruction, Perishing, Extinction

1. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS SIGNIFY UTTER "DESTRUCTION."
—Like the inspired penmen of the Old Testament, the New Testament writers used the strongest terms at their command to assert a total bringing to nought, or ultimate excision, both of evildoers and of Satan, the source of evil, and of his fallen angels. Many of these New Testament terms, it is to be noted, are borrowed from the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, likewise distinctly declaring the total extinction,

or absolute suppression and abolition of the wicked. Thus we are led dependably into the Greek equivalents.

But let us begin with the simplest and most elemental evidence. Here are some twenty of the most common expressions, as they appear in the English Authorized Version translation, with sample supporting texts. Observe the scope and comprehensiveness of the coverage, consistently stressing total obliteration. Here are the leading ones, alphabetically arranged:

- BLOT OUT OF EXISTENCE.**—Heb. 9:26; Rev. 3:5; 18:21.
BRING TO NOUGHT.—1 Cor. 1:19.
CAST AWAY, CAST OFF.—Matt. 13:42, 48, 50; John 12:31.
CONSUME, DEVOUR UTTERLY.—Matt. 3:12; 13:30, 40; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 12:29; Rev. 18:8.
CRUSH.—Rom. 16:20.
CUT OFF, CUT DOWN.—Matt. 3:10; 7:19; Luke 13:7, 9; John 15:2; Acts 3:23; 23:13, 31; Rom. 11:20, 22, 24.
DEATH.—Rom. 5:20; 6:21, 23; 7:5; Rev. 21:8.
DESTROY.—Matt. 10:28; 27:20; Rom. 6:6; 7:6 (1 Cor. 1:19); 2:6; 5:5; 15:24, 26; Gal. 5:15; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8.
DEVOUR.—Heb. 10:27; Rev. 11:5; 20:9.
DIE.—John 5:24; 6:50; 8:24; Rom. 7:6, 10; 8:13; 1 Cor. 15:22, 32; Eph. 2:1, 5; Phil. 2:27; 1 Peter 2:24.
DROWN.—1 Tim. 1:19; 6:9; 2 Peter 3:11, 12.
FALL.—Matt. 7:27; Luke 6:49.
FOUND NO MORE.—Rev. 18:21.
GRIND TO POWDER.—Matt. 21:44; Luke 20:18.
KILL OUTRIGHT, PUT TO DEATH.—Matt. 10:28; 21:41; 22:7; Mark 12:9; Luke 19:27; John 10:10; Rom. 7:11; 8:13; 2 Cor. 3:6; Col. 3:15; Rev. 2:23.
LOSE LIFE.—Matt. 7:13; Mark 4:38; John 11:42; 17:12; Acts 8:20; Rom. 9:22; Phil. 3:19; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Peter 2:1, 2; 3:7, 16; Rev. 17:8, 11.
NEVER SEE LIFE.—John 3:36; 5:40; Acts 13:46; 1 John 3:15; 5:12.
OVERTHROW.—Luke 1:52.
PERISH.—Acts 13:41; 1 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 6:8; 2 Peter 1:4; 2:12; Rev. 11:18.
ROOT OUT.—Jude 12.
RUIN.—Matt. 7:27; Luke 6:49; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10.
SWALLOW UP.—1 Cor. 15:54; 1 Peter 5:8.
THROW DOWN.—Rev. 18:21.
VANISH AWAY.—Heb. 8:13.

These are, of course, all English translations. So, let us turn next to the original Greek terms, and seek out their exact meanings. These are likewise listed alphabetically. But we should first note the observation of a noted Anglican scholar of a generation back, who likewise made a list and then an analysis.

2. CONSTABLE'S CONSIDERED SUPPORTING CONCLUSIONS.—

While various men have developed similar lists,¹ one of the most scholarly analytical tables of the leading Greek terms by which the New Testament describes the future punishment of the wicked, either by way of "infliction or deprivation," is given by Canon Henry Constable, Prebendary of York, in his *Duration and Nature of Future Punishment* (6th ed., London, 1886, pp. 58, 59). Here he lists thirteen principal terms, together with a tabulation of "all the meanings," as applied to each term. The result is most impressive. Constable's considered conclusion is: "A single glance will show that what we understand as the terrible punishment of the wicked, viz., their 'loss of existence,' is found under every one of the above terms" (p. 60).

II. Greek Terms Affirm "Destroy," "Consume," "Perish," "Obliterate"

1. LEADING GREEK TERMS DEFINED.—While the New Testament witness on the ultimate and utter destruction of the incorrigibly wicked is in perfect agreement with that of the Old Testament,² there is now a change of language.³

¹ One, for example, was Denniston (*The Perishing Soul*), who lists *apollumi, olothreuō, exolothreuō, diaphtheirō, kataphtheirō, exaleiphō, analiskō, aphanizō, ektribō, kathairō, kataballō, kataluō, kataskapō*.—J. M. Denniston, *The Perishing Soul* (2d ed., 1874), p. 79.

² An exhaustive philological study of more than fifty roots found in the Old Testament Hebrew (with New Testament equivalents) was made by scholarly Dr. Emanuel Petavel, of the University of Lausanne, and appears in *The Problem of Immortality* (1892), Supplement VI ("List of Biblical Terms Used to Denote Destruction"), pp. 445-452. These are terms used to signify the destruction of animated beings as the ultimate fate of the impenitent. They set forth the complete, final obliteration of the wicked, and are accompanied by the texts wherein the expressions are found.

³ In the Old Testament such terms as the following are typical: CUT OFF (*karath*)—Ps. 37:9, 34; EZE. 28:16; CONSUME (*ba'ar*)—Mal. 4:1, 3; Ps. 21:9; DESTROY (*shachath*)—Ps. 55:23; 145:20; DEVOUR, BURN UP, or CONSUME (*'akal*)—Ps. 21:9; PERISH (*'abad*)—Ps. 37:20; 68:10.



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Jesus, the Seeking Shepherd, Came to Rescue His Wandering Sheep Lost on the Bleak and Barren Mountains of Sin, and Restore It to the Safety and Life of the Fold.

Therefore a new set of terms appears. Here are the leading expressions and their cognates. Note them individually, with illustrative texts, and observe their inescapable collective force and intent. The selections differ slightly from other lists, but the witness is the same. Here are fourteen leading words:

(1) *Analiskō*—to consume, destroy (2 Thess. 2:8).

(2) *Apōleia*—death, especially by violence, loss of things, ruin, waste (Phil. 3:19; 1 Tim. 6:9).

(3) *Apollumi*—to destroy utterly (23 times), come to an end, ruin, to lose utterly, to be utterly and finally ruined and destroyed, cause to perish—stronger form of *ollumi*, to end life, put to death, cause to perish (33 times), bring to nought (Matt. 10:28; 21:41; 22:7; Luke 17:27, 29;

John 3:16; Rom. 2:12; 2 Cor. 4:3). In all the New Testament there is no word that is more distinctly fixed than that of *apollumi*.⁴

(4) *Apothnēskō*—die out, expire, cease (John 11:16, 26; Rom. 8:13, 34; Rev. 9:6; 16:3).

(5) *Diaphtheirō*—to spoil throughout, corrupt utterly (Rev. 11:18).

(6) *Exolothreuō*—to destroy utterly, slay wholly, dissolve. In the Septuagint it is some eighty times rendered *karath*, "cut off" (Acts 3:23; cf. Gen. 17:14; Ex. 30:33; 31:14).

(7) *Katakaiō*—to burn up, or burn down (Matt. 3:12; Luke 3:17).

(8) *Katanaliskō*—to consume wholly or thoroughly (intensive of *analiskō*, 2 Thess. 2:8) (Heb. 12:39).

(9) *Katargeō*—to render inactive, idle, bring to nought, make void, abolish (2 Thess. 2:8). When the unquenchable fire burns out, and the undying worm ceases, death itself is *destroyed* (*katargeō*) (1 Cor. 15:26).

(10) *Kolasis*—punishment, cut off. A *result*, not a process (cf. Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:17).

(11) *Olethros* (*olothreutēs*)—death, ruin, that which causes death (2 Thess. 1:9).

(12) *Phtheirō* (*kataphtheirō*)—to deprave, mar, spoil, corrupt (1 Cor. 3:17).

(13) *Phthora* (*diaphthora*)—corruption, spoiling, destruction (Acts 2:27, 31; Gal. 6:8).

(14) *Thanatos*—extinction of life, death by judgment of court, or judgment of God against sin (the second death, Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:8) (Rom. 6:21, 23).

These Greek words—the main terms and their cognates—involving penal punishing to a greater or less degree, and for a longer or shorter period, always connote the *ultimate loss of life, final and complete termination of being*. They all mean to *end* life or to *take* life, to cause to *cease to be*.

2. NOT ONE IN LIST IMPLIES ETERNAL TORMENT.—Death, destruction, perishing, perdition, are thus seen to be virtually interchangeable terms. These terrible words are used frequently by both Paul and John. *But not one term in this entire tabulation implies the idea of eternal torment*. The most frequently used words for "destroy" and "destruction" are the verb *apollumi* and the noun *apōleia*. John uses the verb in the pre-eminent "John 3:16" ("should not *perish*") verse. Paul

⁴Dr. R. F. Weymouth, previously mentioned Greek authority, in a statement in 1870 to the editor of the English *Independent*, declared: "We maintain that its meaning [that of *apollumi*] is always to *destroy*, to *cause to perish*, and in the middle voice to *perish*, to *cease to be*."—From author's authorized release to Dr. E. Petavel, in *The Problem of Immortality* (1892), supplement No. XIV, p. 489. (Italics in original.)

uses the noun in Philippians 3:19—"whose end is *destruction*." And the same Greek word is translated "*perdition*" in Philippians 1:28. Thus "*perdition*" is equivalent to "destruction," and these in turn are equated with "perishing" and being "lost" (2 Cor. 4:3).

The end of the wicked is sufficiently terrible without adding, from pagan sources, what God has not included. "The wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. 6:23), and the end of sin and incorrigible man is *utter and final destruction*. An illuminating confirmation of this appears in John 11, in Caiaphas' statement: "It is expedient for us, that one man should *die* [*apothnēskō*, "expire," "die out"] for the people, and that the whole nation *perish* [*apollumi*, "be utterly destroyed"] not" (John 11:50).

In John's mind the term "die" bore the same meaning as to "perish" or suffer "destruction" (*apollumi*).⁵ That is the over-all witness of the Greek. But let us note the leading terms in greater detail.

III. Weymouth's Devastating Charge of Manipulated Meanings

After more closely examining the full force of six of the strongest Greek terms, all signifying ultimate and total destruction, the significance of the classic charge of Greek authority Dr. Richard F. Weymouth—appearing at the close—will become apparent. But first let us probe into six of the strongest words:

(1) "APŌLEIA": UTTER LOSS OF EXISTENCE.—As to the fate of the wicked, no other expression is more common or emphatic than *apōleia*—the sentence pronounced upon all who, having heard the summons to repentance and faith in Christ, have resisted in defiance. Christ said, "Broad is the way, that

⁵ See, for example, Dr. R. F. Weymouth's "Philological Study of the Meaning of the Greek Verb *Apollumi*," appearing by authorization of the author in Petavel's *The Problem of Immortality* (1892), pp. 489-495.

leadeth to destruction [*apōleian*]" (Matt. 7:13). And Paul speaks similarly of "vessels of wrath fitted to *destruction* [*apōleian*]" (Rom. 9:22). This is the destruction forever of "body and soul"—utter and final ruin, which will never be reversed. It is the second death, from which there is no return.

No word in the Greek tongue is more significant of the utter loss of existence than *apōleia*. This various lexicons attest. Thus Peter, in rebuking the perfidy of Simon Magus, who sought to purchase the power of God with money, was met by Peter's declaration, "Thy money *perish* [*apōleian*] with thee" (Acts 8:20)—literally, "Thy money go with thee to destruction." Such will be the end of the wicked.

(2) "APOLLUMI": DESTROY UTTERLY, KILL, SLAY.—Alongside the Greek noun (*apōleia*) is the verb *apollumi*, used to signify the punishment God will inflict upon wicked men and demons. It is to destroy utterly, cause to perish, kill, slay, be undone. The fundamental thought is loss, ruin, perish, to come to an end. *Apollumi* is five times applied in Matthew to persons: When Herod attempted to take the life of the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:13); when the Pharisees plotted to deprive Jesus of life when He had grown to manhood (Matt. 12:14); when the lord of the vineyard decreed death to the unfaithful husbandman (Matt. 21:41); when the king punished with death the slaying of his servants (Matt. 22:7); when Christ solemnly declared that God can "destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). (Cf. Mark 9:22; John 10:10.)

The same verb is used seven times in Luke: (a) To take away life from man (Luke 6:9; 9:56); (b) the universal death produced by the Flood (Luke 17:27, 29); (c) the plots of the enemies of Christ against His life (Luke 19:47); (d) the decree of death to the unfaithful husbandmen (Luke 20:16); (e) the wicked spirits, meeting with Christ, filled with terror lest He should have come, before they anticipated, to *destroy* them (Luke 4:34). (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:18; 2 Peter 3:6.)

In ten of these passages reference is to loss of existence here; in the other two it is loss of the eternal hereafter. For this second loss of life, the second and eternal coming death, Hell (Gehenna), has been provided. The lost will there suffer complete destruction. There the devils will also be visited with the loss of the existence to which they desperately cling. Such utter blotting out is a fearful thought to these fallen angels—an obliteration they know to be their inevitable doom.

(3) "APHANIZŌ": DISAPPEAR, VANISH OUT OF EXISTENCE.—Brief mention must be made of three other Greek terms relative to future punishment. The first is *aphanizō*. Thus Paul, warning Jewish hearers at Antioch, says, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and *perish* [*aphanizō*]" (Acts 13:41)—meaning disappear, vanish utterly, to be heard of no more. This is the term used by James when speaking of the transitoriness of this present life (James 4:14), and also by Paul to describe the consummation of retribution, when the wicked rise from their graves to see what they have rejected, and marvel at their folly (Luke 13:27-29), and then, like a "vapour" that "*vanisheth* away [*aphanizō*]," pass out of existence, disappear (James 4:14).

(4) "PHTHEIRŌ": DESTROY BY DEPRIVING OF EXISTENCE.—Another is *phtheirō*—destroy, corrupt, defile, used to express future punishment, in two senses, to deprave and corrupt, and to destroy by depriving of existence. "If any man *defile* [*phtheirō*] the temple of God, him shall God *destroy* [*phtheirō*]"—the same Greek word (1 Cor. 3:17). The first is the sinner's guilty act; the second is God's punishment hereafter by destruction.

(5) "DIAPHTHEIRŌ": INTENSIFIED FORM OF DESTROY UTTERLY.—In its composite form (*diaphtheirō*) this verb combines the same two senses and intensifies their force. It signifies, "to destroy utterly," and "kill," as well as lead astray and corrupt. In the Apocalypse it is used to describe the future punishment where John says that God will "*destroy* [*diaphtheirō*]"

them which destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18)—the same verb in both cases. (See also 2 Peter 2:12.)

(6) "EXOLOTHREUŌ": UTTER DESTRUCTION BY DEATH.—Another Greek verb and noun for "destroy" and "destruction," *exolothreuō*, and *olethros*, signify utter destruction by death. Thus, "Every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be *destroyed* [*exolothreuō*] from among the people" (Acts 3:23), and the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting *destruction* [*olethros*] from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:3; 1 Tim. 6:9).

That is a cross section of the basic testimony of the Greek. Little wonder that the illustrious Dr. Weymouth, of Mill Hill, master of the Greek text of the New Testament, editor of *The Resultant Greek Testament*, and translator of *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, strikingly declared in an authorized published statement:

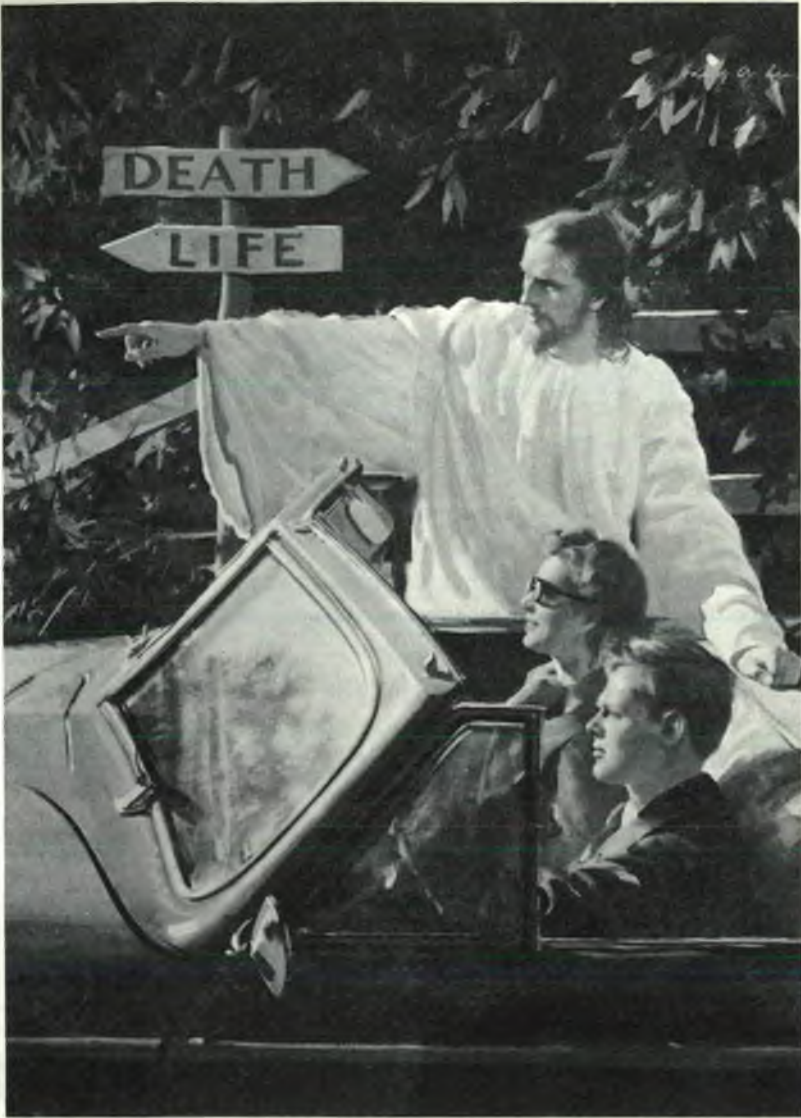
"My mind fails to conceive a grosser misinterpretation of language than when the five or six strongest words which the Greek tongue possesses, signifying 'destroy,' or 'destruction,' are explained to mean maintaining an everlasting but wretched existence. To translate black as white is nothing to this."⁶

IV. Succinct Summary of Over-all Evidence

We now tersely summarize our findings:

(1) There is no principle in Scripture that demands the perpetual existence of the damned or the indestructibility of the individual incapable of becoming eternally holy and happy. Eternal, conscious suffering not only is repugnant to the moral sense of man but is utterly opposed to the revealed portrayal of the love and justice of God. Moreover, there would have to be indestructible life for the endurance of endless torments. But as the wicked do not possess such life, there could not automatically be endless torments for them. And the Infinite Power which can and did create also can and will *discreate*.

⁶ Quoted in Edward White's *Life in Christ* (3d ed., 1878), p. 365.



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The Saviour Points the Way to Life. He Does Not Want Any to Die. He Is the Complete Saviour.

(2) The punishment of the wicked is irremedial and definitive, and in that sense eternal. But the expressions "eternal punishment," "unquenchable fire," et cetera, mean, basically, that there will be no deliverance, no revival or ultimate restoration of the wicked. They will absolutely cease to be. The

point is not the nature of the fire but of what is *in* the fire. The "*first death*" does not shut out the hope of being brought to life again, but the "second," or "eternal, death" does. The "lake of fire," which is the "second death" (Rev. 20:14, 15), puts the period at the end to the dying life of the obstinate sinner. It marks the final suppression of all life. It is the point of no return.

(3) Ordinary fire might be quenched before it has entirely consumed what it is reducing to ashes. "Unquenchable fire" cannot be put out before it destroys utterly. But the fire does not continue on after having burned out, and the victim does not escape, since he is destroyed. Such fire is thus the symbol of total destruction. Far from indicating eternal torments, it sets forth inextinguishable destruction.

(4) There will, of course, be accompanying suffering, proportionate to the demands of the just judgment of God—then eternal cessation of being, in obedience to the requisites of divine justice and righteous law. The suffering is but a preliminary phase of the total punishment.

(5) By the word "annihilation" (played up by antagonists of Conditionalism), if used, is simply meant the extinction of the conscious life or personality and the termination of all of its faculties. Death always designates destruction. The sinner leads a hopelessly dying life, ending finally in the "second death," which is complete and determinative. When the ruin is complete it puts an end to the existence of the sinner. Therein is the blended mercy and justice of God. The punishment of the wicked involves not only death but *loss of eternal life and denial of Immortality*. The punishment is not merely negative, a failure to receive the reward of life; it is positive, a punishment for sin and deprivation of life.

(6) The elimination of evil and evildoers by way of extinction is thus seen to be in conformity with the declarations of Scripture, the dictates of reason, and the demands of equity. And the very nature and integrity of God, as immaculate holiness and the personification of almighty infinite power, imply

that He will not tolerate evil in His universe forever. That He has plainly disclosed.

Note this cumulative documented series and its climax. Satan and his cohorts will be destroyed (Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14, 15; cf. Gen. 3:15). The "lawless one" will be brought to nought (2 Thess. 2:8). The great rebellion will be suppressed (Rev. 19:20; cf. Dan. 7:11, 26). There will be no more curse (Rev. 22:3). Death will be abolished (2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4; cf. Isa. 25:8). Death will forever lose its sting (1 Cor. 15:55, 56). Death and Hades join Satan in the abyss of destruction—the "lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev. 20:14). Sinners are no more. That is the ultimate faith of the irreconcilables.

But God will be all in all to those who survive the scrutiny of the final judgment (1 Cor. 15:28), and the redeemed will live on in glorious triumph forevermore (Matt. 25:46). Evil will then have disappeared, and grace will "much more" abound (Rom. 5:20). It is the end of sin. There will thus be a clean universe forever.

Summing Up the Case for Biblical Conditionalism

I. Conditionalism Accentuated and Enforced in New Testament

1. COMPLETE HARMONY BETWEEN TESTAMENTS.—Immortality, set forth as *conditional* in the Old Testament, is even more conspicuously declared to be *conditional* in the New. The later innovation of the inherent continuity and indestructibility of the human soul, introduced into the Christian Church in a time of developing apostasy, finds no support in Christ's personal teaching or in the subsequent apostolic theology set forth in the New Testament.

On the contrary, the New Testament completely sustains the uniform position of Moses and the prophets, giving it precision, amplification, finality, and majesty. And it is of more than passing interest that, in so doing, the New Testament often borrows the terms employed in the Septuagint translation to bring over into the Greek the corresponding words and intent of the original Hebrew, as pertains to this issue. It thus forms an invaluable connecting link between the Old and the New in this specific field.

Like the Old Testament, the New proclaims the eternity of God but has nothing to say of any innate, inalienable Immortality possessed by man. Neither the term nor the thought can be found between Matthew 1 and Revelation 22. Immortality results from personal faith in the personal power and provision of Almighty God, who has purposed and provided Immortality for man as a gift through Christ—but on clearly

enunciated *conditions*. The redeemed, righteous, and obedient shall live; the ungodly, obstinate sinners shall be completely destroyed (2 Thess. 1:9; cf. Ps. 92:9). That is the gist of Conditionalism.

2. IMMORTALIZATION ACCENTUATED AND AMPLIFIED IN NEW TESTAMENT.—This important addition, however, is to be noted. In the New Testament the horizons are definitely widened and the foundations more firmly buttressed and expanded. The path to the grave becomes brighter and more luminous as the gospel day begins to dawn. Eternity of life for the one, and eternity of ultimate nonexistence for the other, outlined in the Old Testament, is more fully revealed and accentuated in the New.

Jesus, supreme Authority and Witness of all time, as concerns man, not only upholds but intensifies and delimits the *conditions* of immortalization. Man becomes immortal only by grace, assured through faith in Christ and His righteousness, which is first imputed and then imparted to the believer. Then, upon Christ's return, comes glorification and realized immortalization for the righteous.

This is the uniqueness of the gospel—that Jesus offers in and through His own person the sole means whereby a man may obtain righteousness and then Immortality. It is not man's inherently. Christ's expiatory death gives assurance of divine pardon, and the pledge of imperishable life becomes the portion of all who unite themselves to the risen, triumphant Christ by faith. Such is the fundamental offer of the New Testament and the declared aim of the gospel. This was the message still proclaimed by Christ after His resurrection, shortly before His parting commission and ascension. Here is John's record: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

There it is, compressed into a single sentence. In this climactic passage, life is used in its full sense and force—life at the highest level, life that is to be never ending and all em-

bracing; life that will be imperishable, life based on belief in, and acceptance of, Christ's offer of eternal life. That again is the essence of Conditionalism.

3. IMMORTALITY AN ACQUISITION, NOT INHERENT POSSESSION.—“Life” in the New Testament means actual life, and “death” means the diametric opposite of life—the *deprivation of all life, the end of all activity, the cessation of all individual faculties*. Death, without any escape or resuscitation—absolute death, four times called the “second death”—terminates in the complete cessation of being of the wicked. It is the end of the recalcitrant human entity. Christ came that “who-soever believeth in him should not perish [*apollumi*, “be utterly and finally destroyed,” “brought to nought”], but have everlasting *life*” (John 3:16). That is the matchless provision of the gospel.

If one can “perish,” obviously he is not by nature immortal. And if he is not by nature immortal, there is nothing inconsistent in saying, in conformity with Scripture, that Christ must *confer* Immortality upon man if he is to live forever. Consequently all New Testament texts that directly or indirectly state that Christ is our life, and confers eternal life, such as John 3:16, confirm the Conditional-Immortality postulate. This signifies that true believers, escaping the total destruction that awaits the impenitent sinner, acquire an imperishable and perpetual life through Christ alone. Immortality is therefore an acquisition, not an inherent possession. That, once more, is the essence of Conditionalism.

4. CONTRASTING POSITIONS SUCCINCTLY SET FORTH.—Conditionalists do not differ from Immortal-Soulists over the *fact* of a future life, but over the *nature and source of that life* and the *time of receiving it*. “Immortality” has been overlaid and loaded down with philosophical speculations and devious traditions. Immortal-Soulists insist that death is not an interruption or cessation of the natural life of man, but is simply entrance upon a new and glorified stage in that life. That,

they insist, was the ancient belief of the nations of antiquity.¹

They hold that, instead of terminating at death, the real life of man simply intensifies and enlarges into a new sphere of activity, either in holiness and happiness, or sin and misery, and that man will continue to live on forever by virtue of the innate essence of life within him, being sustained by some indefeasible power, so as to suffer forever, if incorrigibly wicked.

On the contrary Conditionalists hold that since the Fall death terminates the natural life of man, and that the life hereafter is not natural, inherited from Adam, but *supernatural*, received from God. They hold, furthermore, that only through the vicarious death and triumphant resurrection of Christ is there any resurrection or life whatever for man hereafter—for “if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (1 Cor. 15:17, 18).

Immortality has thus by Christ been brought within reach of rebellious creatures otherwise destined to absolute death. In fact, He came to reveal and proclaim the secret of immortalization. That is Heaven’s glad tidings for man. When once this majestic truth is grasped, it throws a floodlight upon all other saving truths. That again is Conditionalism.

5. IMMORTAL-SOULISM IS IMMORTALITY WITHOUT A SAVIOUR.—Conditionalists believe in the supernatural resurrection of the dead, in a general judgment, and in the absolute finality of that judgment. They believe in the “*second death*” for the wicked, and thus in the finality of their doom. In contrast they believe in the “*life everlasting*” of the righteous, raised through Christ—and that this is the highest and most glorious of all possible life, *eternal life*, the impartation of God’s own pure and blessed immortal life, based upon en-

¹ Presumptive evidence of the Innate Immortality of the soul is often put forth on the basis of its general belief among the nations of antiquity. But an appeal to a *consensus sentium* does not constitute proof, any more than does the argument of man’s inner aspirations. The fact that the vast majority once believed the world to be flat did not make it so. Universal hunger for Immortality is *implanted* by God as an incentive to seeking and finding immortality. But it must be in God’s way and upon His terms.

trance into the proffered new and living relationship to Jesus Christ.

This, then, is the basic issue—whether we are immortalized by Christ, through the preparatory *new* birth and subsequent resurrection, or whether we are immortal by our own *natural* birth from Adam. In other words, it is whether Immortality, as the “*gift of God,*” is “eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23), or whether there is inherent Immortality *without a Saviour*, and His atoning death and saving life.

And it should here be stressed (as will be seen in Part IV) that the *earliest*, or Apostolic, Church Fathers maintained this Conditionalist position. The doctrinal deviation of one segment of the *later* Fathers was caused by the infiltration and acceptance of the Platonic philosophy, received into an increasingly confused and vacillating church. And, at the same time, the Platonized philosophy of the Alexandrian Jews added the pressure of its divergent weight upon the faltering theology of the Fathers. There was thus a dual pressure that proved overwhelming to a growing majority. A large segment of Christianity succumbed, and Conditionalism went into virtual eclipse for centuries.

6. CONDITIONALISM IS POSITIVE, NOT NEGATIVE.—Again, Conditionalism is a positive, not a negative, position and provision. It is to be emphasized that Conditionalists hold Immortality for *the good alone* to be a fundamental proviso of the gospel. Thus the apostle John says, “He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:17). This gives the basis of distinction and the assurance of the permanence of the obedient. Sin, on the contrary, leads to disintegration and ruin, while sowing to the Spirit leads to the reaping of “life everlasting” (Gal. 6:8).

To view Conditionalism as largely a question of the final future punishment of the wicked is to miss its real significance. That is merely looking at the reverse side of the pattern. The glorious provision of the *more abundant life* is its central con-

cept, its positive motivating principle. That is the heart of Conditionalism.

7. MORE GAINED THROUGH CHRIST THAN LOST THROUGH ADAM.—There is yet another angle that must not be missed—the justice of God, blended with His goodness and mercy, implicit in Conditionalism. The trial of our first parents in Eden could not have been made under conditions more favorable to a successful outcome. They were swayed by no sinful tendencies, had no compelling habits, and possessed no bent toward evil.

But the tragic results of the Edenic test proved that the human race was not yet fit for Immortality. If God had not purposed to provide eternal life through another probation, mankind's case would have been hopeless. But we came under the operation of a marvelous system, a divine provision of grace, by which eternal life is offered to us again by a new birth, effected through a *Second* Adam, the reception of the righteousness of Christ, and a subsequent resurrection from the dead. That was the divine provision and process.

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul [or being]; the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] spirit. Howbeit that was *not first* which is spiritual, but that which is *natural* [*psuchikon*, "possessing animal life"]; and *afterward* that which is *spiritual* [*pneumatikon*, belonging to the Spirit]. The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:45-50).

The same eminent apostle adds, "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die" (v. 36). Death, as explained by Inspiration, is a somber but inevitable part of this world's mottled picture. It is therefore plain, from the gospel, that we gain infinitely more in Christ than we lost in Adam. What we lost in Adam was an earthly Paradise, but what we gain through the Second Adam is a celestial Paradise forevermore. Christ came not simply to repair the ruin of the

Fall and to bring mankind back in penitence to God but to raise lost but ransomed man to a state infinitely higher than that of Adam in his first innocency in Eden.

The *first* Adam had but a potential, contingent life, which he forfeited for himself and his posterity under the temptation and the Fall. But the *Second* Adam proved Himself superior to the seductions of the great deceiver. He possesses absolute sinlessness and righteousness in His own right. And this righteousness, along with eternal life, He bestows upon His own through the supernatural second birth and a resurrection from among the dead. It is first imputed, then actually imparted. And this bestowal the great adversary can never again take away. Thus Christ said:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27, 28).

"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

That is the glory and the triumph of the gospel. That is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. And that is the process and the principle of Conditional Immortality.

II. Issues Illuminated Through Significant Series of "Two's"

Within the New Testament a significant series of "two's" stands forth, augmenting and amplifying the basic teachings begun in the Old Testament. These complete the unique testimony of the Word on the two worlds, two Adams, two progenitors, two births, two covenants, two classes, two kingdoms, two advents, two lives, two deaths, two resurrections, two ways, and two eternal destinies—the irrevocable endings of these divergent ways.

Comparisons and contrasts are introduced by Christ and His apostles that throw a floodlight of understanding on this question of the origin, nature, and destiny of man. A

survey of the inevitable implications of this series is desirable, because the traditional concept of the continuing persistence of a single, unending life—an innately, indefeasibly immortal life for all men—has tragically blurred or made void those distinctions so sharply drawn in Holy Writ that otherwise would have remained transparently clear.

It seems to have been the studied aim of human philosophy to ignore or obscure these distinctions or to mystify and confound them. And the medieval papal church and the Protestant churches that followed in her footsteps here, have so molded their creeds and fashioned their theologies as to perpetuate this confusion. It is therefore incumbent upon us to re-examine this provocative series given to guide us.

This additional factor should, however, be noted at the outset. The divine intimations of restoration, early given to man to keep the race from utter demoralization and discouragement, in time became distorted by darkened minds into perverted postulates regarding the soul. These were thenceforth passed on by tradition from generation to generation. This is obviously the origin of those twisted notions of the future state that came to prevail throughout the ancient pagan world.

Finally they brought division and ruin to the faith of the Jewish church through their adoption. This occurred shortly before the proclamation of the gospel of Christ began, which was designed to restore the purity of revealed truth and the radiance of inspired light and to put the darkness of perversion to flight. Pressured by hopes and fears, men had given free rein to their imaginations, thus distorting the divine provisions into fanciful notions and fallacious theories concerning the soul, both here and hereafter. Now note this Biblical series of two's:

1. TWO WORLDS: TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL.—As to the two worlds, the first one is graphically described in Genesis 1 and 2. Upon creation it was pronounced "very good" (Gen. 1: 31), in accordance with its nature. But its nature, cursed be-

cause of the fall and sin of man, became dominantly material and earthly. Death and decay came to characterize this present order.

Then progressively, first in the Old Testament and next in the New, there is revealed a better, more glorious world to come—eternal in nature and structure, under the divine order, and fitted to continue forever (Heb. 13:14). It is specifically called the “world to come” (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Heb. 2:5; 6:5). It is the “better country,” the “better land,” desired by the patriarchs of old (Heb. 11:16).

And it is here tied in inseparably with “eternal life,” or “life everlasting,” for its ransomed citizens. Thus, “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18).

The forecast and nature of this “world to come” were but gradually unfolded in the Old Testament. Isaiah prophesied of the new earth that God had promised to create (Isa. 65:17). It would supersede the old, and remain forever (Isa. 66:22). But in the New Testament, Peter tells more explicitly of the coming “new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

The glories of the second Paradise, of which the Edenic first was a type, are still more fully and clearly unfolded by the seer of Patmos. Here in the Revelation, John portrays the establishment of this “new earth,” to come after the present earth has “passed away” (Rev. 21:1)—a new earth reserved exclusively for the immortally redeemed, with its essential tree and water of life (Rev. 22). And this “better country,” with its immortalized inhabitants, remains forever.

2. TWO ADAMS: THE NATURAL, THEN THE SPIRITUAL.—Next are the two Adams. The first man was formed out of the “dust of the ground” (Gen. 2:7). He was the highest and noblest of all earthly creatures. Yet he was essentially earthly—as he soon proved himself to be, and as his very name, “Adam,” indicates. He “became a living soul” (v. 7), endowed with life like the animals beneath him. But he differed from the

brute creation in that he was endowed with a capacity for a higher life—the unending life of the spiritual world beyond, as intended for him by his Creator.

But this could only be secured by becoming established in holiness, without which he could neither retain Paradise nor enjoy it. Tested, and failing through sin, and thus proving unworthy of the boon prepared for him, he sank to the condition of a perishable earthly creature. And as such he became the progenitor of an earthly mortal posterity. “That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual” (1 Cor. 15:46). Another Progenitor was needed.

Then came the Second, or Last, Adam (1 Cor. 15:45-47), born of a woman, yet begotten of God. He was the Son of man, yet was the Son of God. He was both divine and human—Heaven’s provided link between this lower world of darkness and death and that higher world of light and life, of which He is the designated Lord. “In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15), He overcame where Adam fell, dying as a member of the human family for the redemption of man, yet possessed of absolute, original Immortality in His own right, which could not be lost, and being made perfect through suffering, “he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

And to “as many as received him,” He gives “power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). That is God’s provision for the redemption of man and the restoration of his forfeited *life*.

3. SECOND ADAM: PROGENITOR OF IMMORTAL RACE.—As noted, the first Adam was the progenitor of a race fallen like himself—earthly, carnal, sinful, mortal. It is incontestably clear that Adam’s descendants could not therefore inherit from him an Immortality which he did not himself possess, and which because of his fall he failed to secure for himself. But the *Second* Adam is the progenitor of a race who, transformed into His likeness, are pure in heart and spiritual in

nature, and who are to inherit from Him His own Immortal Life at His second advent. Though now subject to physical death, they will, in due time, enter upon that "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:4, 5).

He, then, is our spiritual progenitor.

4. TWO BIRTHS: FIRST FLESHLY, SECOND SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL.—There are thus two births, or begettings. No child of Adam can inherit eternal life except he be born (begotten) "again" (*anōthen*, "by divine power") from "above," from Heaven (cf. John 3:3).

"That which is born [begotten] of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born [begotten] of the Spirit is spirit. . . . Ye must be born again" (vs. 6, 7).

From Adam we inherited a mortal, transitory life. For a life beyond, we must have a life ingenerated by the Holy Spirit—the life provided from Christ. This is the life uniformly and repeatedly spoken of by our Lord as "the life everlasting"—a life directly from Him, who alone can make us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12).

5. TWO COVENANTS: FIRST OF WORKS, SECOND OF FAITH.—The dispensation of grace brings us under a new covenant, or ministrations. The *first* covenant was a covenant of works. "This do, and thou shalt live." It was legal. Its rewards, penalties, and motives were earthly, though elevated. It could "never . . . make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1)—that is, complete. "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (Heb. 8:7).

The *second*, or new, covenant is a covenant of *faith*. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31; cf. 13:39). This requires an implicit trust in an omnipo-

tent Saviour. That was necessary that we might receive endless life. The new covenant's appeals are to the higher nature, now begotten within the new man by the Spirit of God. Its motives and rewards are spiritual, heavenly, eternal (Hebrews 7; 8; 9). And it all centers about restoration of the *lost life*.

6. TWO CLASSES: CARNAL AND PERISHING, HEAVENLY AND ABIDING.—Mankind is divided into two classes—those destined for *life and Immortality*, and those headed for *death and destruction*. These two classes are always placed in juxtaposition, comparison being made by contrast. The most familiar categories are:

Sinners and saints
 Wicked and righteous
 Unbelievers and believers
 Reprobates and heirs
 Enemies of God and friends of God
 Foolish and wise
 Tares and wheat
 Dross and gold
 Children of this world and children of the kingdom
 Children of the wicked one (or wrath) and children of God (or the Highest)
 Those who live after the flesh, and those who live after the Spirit

The *first* class is carnally-minded. They live after the flesh, are controlled by worldly motives, seek for worldly gain, and pursue the things that perish with the using. And when the world is finally destroyed, at the last day, they must perish with it, along with their treasures, for they have no portion or inheritance beyond.

The *second* class is spiritually-minded, and led by the Spirit of God. Through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the flesh (Rom. 8:13). They are controlled by spiritual influences, seek those things which are above, that are pure and eternal. Their choice is the "better part," which shall never be taken away (Luke 10:42). They, and they alone, will have eternal life.

7. TWO KINGDOMS: OF GOD AND OF SATAN.—There are likewise two kingdoms. Briefly, *one* is of this world, over

which the great enemy of God and man bears rule, as prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). It is a kingdom of evil, disorder, sorrow, darkness, sin, and death. It is a kingdom doomed to overthrow, and to utter and irremedial ruin and destruction.

The *other* kingdom is the kingdom of God, of Heaven, of our Lord, the Prince of life (Acts 3:15). It is a kingdom of light and glory and power. It is a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17); which, established by the Son of God as His everlasting kingdom, shall endure forever. It is "not of this world" (John 18:36). The immortalized saints will possess it (Dan. 7:27).

8. TWO ADVENTS: IN THE FLESH, AND IN POWER AND GLORY.—The establishment of this kingdom involves two advents. First, the Son of God came in the flesh, as a babe in Bethlehem, at the appointed time, as the Son of man, to live among men "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4), to suffer and die. And then, victorious over the power of death, He rose and ascended on high leading "captivity [*aixmalōsian*, "body of captives," "multitude of captives," margin, Eph. 4:8] *captive*."²

Christ gave His own assurance that He will come again at the appointed time to gather the fruits of His victory, to raise the dead, and execute judgment upon the world, destroying all that is vile and sinful and destructible. Then He will make all things new. "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the *second time* without sin [apart from sin] unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). And in that "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," Christ shall reign as King over His redeemed people forever. So two comings of one Saviour and Lord are necessitated.

9. TWO RESURRECTIONS: TO "LIFE" AND TO "DAMNATION."—Concurrent with the Second Advent comes the resurrection of the righteous dead, or sleeping saints (1 Thess. 4:16,

² Cf. Matt. 27:52, 53; Rom. 1:4.

17; 1 Cor. 15:52). The resurrection is in two installments. "They that are Christ's [come forth] at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). This is given pre-eminence. It is called the "first," the "better," resurrection, the resurrection unto "life." This is the "hope . . . of the dead" in Christ (Acts 23:6).

The "rest of the dead" (the wicked) are not called forth until the close of the thousand years (Rev. 20:5). They will then come forth to hear the just decision of the judgment as it affects them and to perish under the execution of that judgment (v. 13).

So all will "hear the voice of the Son of God," and all who "hear" will live again (John 5:25)—"they that have done good" are brought forth unto the "resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (v. 29). The latter are consigned to the second death, from which there is no recall. Christ will lose none of the trophies of His redemptive grace and work (chap. 6:39), but will raise each one who believes in Him to "everlasting life"—"raise him up at the last day" (v. 44; cf. 11:24, 25).

Paul concurs by declaring that there shall be a resurrection both of the "just," and of the "unjust" (Acts 24:15). And those who rise to everlasting life will have glorified, incorruptible, immortalized bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 52-55)—bodies changed into the immortal likeness of Christ's glorious body (Phil. 3:21). In dismal contrast will be those brought forth to hear their sentence of doom, then to pass, after due punishment, into complete cessation of being.

10. FINALITY OF SEPARATION OCCURS AT SECOND ADVENT.

—The final separation of all mankind into the two classes is made manifest and actually takes place at Christ's second coming in transcendent glory. Then the righteous only are resurrected from the dead, while the wicked ("the rest of the dead"—Rev. 20:5) await their later resurrection turn and summons (1 Cor. 15:23). The righteous living will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, at His return (1 Thess. 4:17),

while the living wicked will be smitten down by death through the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. 2:8). Thus, under the impressive figure of the "sheep" and the "goats," so well known at that time "he [Christ] shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. 25:32, 33).

Those on the left will, at the appointed time, "go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous [on the right] into life eternal" (v. 46), to "inherit the kingdom prepared" for them "from the foundation of the world" (v. 34).

Mark it well: These final endings do not represent simply two types and conditions of *perpetual life* (of everlasting happiness, or of eternal misery), but *everlasting life* on the one hand, in contradistinction to *everlasting punishment by the second death*, on the other, from which there is no resurrection. The *first* death cuts off from temporal life; the *second* death cuts off from eternal life. It ends all hope of further life forever.

11. TWO DEATHS: FIRST DEATH FOR ALL, SECOND ONLY FOR WICKED.—There are thus the first and second deaths. These are given great prominence in the Biblical depiction. But confusion and misunderstanding arose from imbibing the principles of the Platonic philosophy, which denies the actuality of the first death by assuming that man is an immortal being. Consequently, for such there is no place for a second death.

The natural, or *first*, death is in consequence of the sin of the race rather than as punishment of personal transgressions. All die, good and bad alike. To put it another way, we die the first time primarily because of Adam's generic sin. The punishment for personal sins is the "second death" (Rev. 20: 6, 14; 21:8). Or to put it still another way: The portion of the saved will be the *second life*, eternal life, immortal life, while the portion of the lost will be the *second death* of utter destruction.

According to the uniform testimony of the Word, the second death itself is the final *end* of the sinner's career. "Sin, when it is *finished*, bringeth forth *death*" (James 1:15). Furthermore, if there be no actual *death* in the first "death," there can, perforce, be no actual resurrection from the "dead."

Consequently, all the awe-inspiring depictions of the Second Advent—the power and glory, the hosts of resplendent attending angels, the opening of the graves, the dead coming forth, and the glad reunions for the righteous forevermore—are looked upon as simply Oriental figures of speech. They are construed to mean nothing more than the emergence of the spirit from its encumbering body-prison, released like a balloon when the cord is cut that ties it to earth, so that it can soar above to the realms of bliss. That is the fanciful picture inherited from pagan philosophy and Christian deviation.

12. SECOND DEATH FOLLOWS SECOND RESURRECTION.—The "*second death*"—named only in the Apocalypse, but referred to in principle many times elsewhere—is not merely the natural death that comes upon all men at the close of this life, but is a death coming *after* the resurrection, restricted to those who are adjudged unworthy of eternal life. Four times this term "second death" is employed—and invariably placed in contrast with life everlasting, which is given to the righteous. Note them again:

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the *second death*" (Rev. 2:10, 11).

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

"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" (vs. 11-15).

Then, after a glowing description of the glories of the heavenly Paradise, when God shall "wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be *no more death*, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"—the revelator declares:

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the *second death*" (Rev. 21:8).

13. SECOND DEATH FOR IRRECLAIMABLY WICKED ONLY.—

Now it is undeniable that there can be no *second death* without a *first death*. And the second must be an actual *death*, like the first, otherwise there could be no propriety in employing the term "*second*." As stated, the first death is the death to which all earthly creatures are subject. Man alone has a resurrection, and another life offered by an omnipotent Saviour through a resurrection from the dead. So the *first death* is the common lot of all men from Adam onward, irrespective of character or conduct as individuals. But "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

The "*second death*" is the destiny only of those who "neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3), offered through Christ. Consequently, the second death is solely for the irreclaimably wicked. We who live in the present life are all born to die once. But we must be born again, by a heavenly spiritual birth, if we are to avoid the second death, and thus live forever. As the first death puts an end to man's earthly life, and he reverts to the dust from which he was formed, so the second death precludes entrance upon the life beyond, and remands all who fall under its doom of destruction, both "soul and body" (Matt. 10:28), to the nonexistence from which they were first called.

Whether the process of destruction be longer or shorter, according to the just mandates of the judgment, the end of the process is *death*. As Paul says, "whose *end* [of the "enemies

of the cross," Phil. 3:18] is *destruction*" (v. 19), and "the *end* of those things is *death*" (Rom. 6:21; cf. 1:32). Death is therefore the final end of sin, the final issue of the conflict between Christ and Satan, the final consummation of the cruel experiment of sin, so vividly pictured in the Revelation. For the righteous the first death lasts only until the first resurrection. For the wicked, the second death, following the second resurrection, lasts forever.

14. THE TWO WAYS: WAY OF LIFE, AND WAY OF DEATH. —Two opposite "ways" are set forth in Scripture, along with the fact that all men tread one or the other. Moses of old was called upon to declare to God's ancient people: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I [the Lord] have set before you *life* and *death*, blessing and cursing; therefore choose *life*, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).

In verse 15 "life and *good*" and "death and *evil*" are tied inseparably together in the contrasting couplets. Later, Jeremiah repeated the same solemn dictum, broadening each into a "*way*": "Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I set before you the *way of life*, and the *way of death*" (Jer. 21:8).

But how, it might be asked, could the way of holiness be called the "*way everlasting*," as the psalmist puts it, in contrast with the "*wicked way*" (Ps. 139:24), if *both* ways are everlasting—one with everlasting holiness and happiness, the other everlasting sin and misery? Then the wise man warns, "There is a *way* which seemeth right unto a man, but the *end* thereof are the *ways of death*" (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). It has one end. Next, Ezekiel throws these ways into vivid contrast, declaring that "the soul that sinneth, it shall *die*" (Eze. 18:20), but the repentant righteous shall "save his soul *alive*" (v. 27). And he declares: "I have no pleasure in the *death* of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and *live ye*" (v. 32).

Christ Himself picks up and presses this theme of the two "*ways*":

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to *destruction*, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto *life*, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13, 14).

And as might be expected, Paul likewise stresses the end of the two ways:

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall *die*: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall *live*" (Rom. 8:13).

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap *corruption*; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap *life everlasting*" (Gal. 6:7, 8).

15. DESTINED ENDINGS OF THE TWO WAYS.—Summarizing: After His resurrection Christ was received up into Heaven as a pledge of the coming restoration of humanity, and as proof of the eternal union now established between God and redeemed man. When Christ appears again, the second time, He will *raise* the sleeping saints and *translate* the living ones (1 Cor. 15:21-24, 51-57). And when the appointed hour shall come, the wicked dead—whose names have been blotted out of the book of life—will be brought forth from their graves to receive sentence and to be consumed by the *second* death, which involves utter destruction of body and soul, along with the obliteration of Satan, the malign author of sin, ruin, and death (Matt. 25:31, 32, 41, 46)—and all his evil cohorts with him.

He and his evil minions and all men and demons who follow him will perish utterly in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:5-15). And all this because of choosing the evil and rejecting the good. This involves the extinction of all life, the utter end of the individual human personality. Nothing remains but the elements of which it was composed. And these disintegrate, and the person becomes as though he had not been.

The promised new heaven and new earth will replace this age-old, sin-scarred battleground, and a clean universe will be brought into being—without sin, sinners, or Satan to

mar (Rev. 21; 22). The righteous will have all received Immortality and incorruption. Then it is that they will "shine forth as the sun" (Matt. 13:43), and "as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). Then God will be "all in all," and the glory of the Lord will fill the earth forever (Hab. 2:14; cf. Isa. 11:9). Those are the ultimate issues, the outcome of the two ways of Life and Death.

III. Fundamental Fallacy of Immortal-Soulist Concept

Before closing this chapter let us face this incontestable fact frankly: Something happened long ago in the theological world. The radical distinction between the natural and the supernatural, as pertains to the nature and destiny of man, came to be confused and flouted, along with a denial of the gulf that is fixed in Scripture between the physical, earthly, and transitory, and that which is spiritual, heavenly, and eternal—a distinction explicitly spelled out by Inspiration.

An unwarranted, mystical, allegorical interpretation has been imposed upon the pivotal words of Scripture, such as "soul," "death," "resurrection," "destruction." This whole area of doctrine has been arbitrarily brought under a specious system of allegorization, or spiritualization, borrowed from Philo the Jew and Origen the Neoplatonic Christian philosopher. "Death," instead of being recognized as an unconscious sleep, is considered by multiplied millions to be the mystic door by which the *righteous* enter forever upon that higher state of existence for which they have been preparing here below.

And as for the irreparably wicked, "death" is likewise conceived to be the inexorable door by which the *wicked* enter upon a hopeless state of *paralleling eternal life*, only in sin and misery. To such, "death" is still eternal existence. So to the Immortal-Soulist, the "*second*" death is simply unending life in ceaseless sin and irremediable torment. Such contenders are completely baffled in attempting to explain the "*second*

death" aspect—merely making it *unalterable continuance* forever, instead of a penalized *ending*, and thus missing the fundamental point of the comparison.

Beyond question, the notion of Innate Immortality started somewhere, some time. And history attests that it stems back through Protestantism to the older Catholicism, and thence back to the early Christian and Jewish apostasies, and prior to that back to pagan philosophy—and, before all these, back to the original lie of Satan, uttered within the gates of Eden. Such is the indelible trail of this delusive fiction that has insinuated itself into the teachings of Christianity and has established itself as a preponderant belief of both Catholicism and Protestantism. But such a lineage is the reason we do not hesitate to challenge its validity and to urge its repudiation.

I. DUALISM NOT PART OF DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES.—

There is also a related involvement in the Eternal Torment dogma. If Satan and his demonic and human followers are not to be and cannot be destroyed, then Christ cannot become "Lord of all," nor His kingdom a universal kingdom. In such an event, a special segment of His kingdom would have to be portioned off, for all eternity, as a special habitation for enemies that He cannot conquer and destroy. He can torment them and isolate them, but they can still blaspheme His name and defy His power to harm them further—and that forevermore. So they say.

Picture the scene: Raging hosts below, with groans and blasphemies, living on forever under a pagan dualism spawned in Persia of old. But the dualistic concept of Persian Zoroastrianism was based on the contention that there are *two* eternal principles (Ormuzd and Ahriman), one eternally good and the other everlastingly evil; that these were both without beginning and both without end, and so continue on in eternal, unending conflict with each other.

On the contrary, Christian theologians who are proponents of Immortal-Soulism, while holding that there are two such opposing principles, and principals, now at war with each

other, say that only the Godhead had no beginning and was eternally existent throughout the eternity of the past. They recognize that evil, stemming from Satan as author, is an innovation and had a beginning. But they illogically hold that now, having begun to be, it must forever remain in being, endlessly marring and challenging God's once perfect universe. More than that, they maintain, or concede, that *God Himself cannot put an end to its existence.*

That is a tremendously serious charge to make, and one that is completely at variance with the Sacred Word, which declares that God will finally extirpate all evil from the universe. What He has created He can destroy. The truth is that evil is but a tragic episode—a temporary interlude—in the divine, eternal plan of the ages. And as it had a beginning in time, so will it end within the confines of time, before the aeons of the eternity of the future begin to unroll. Sin is relatively incidental and passing, not integral and perpetual. The time will come when it will end. The "lake of fire" will mark the exodus of sin and death forever.

Thus the subtle, delusive, dual fiction of Innate Immortality and Endless Torment obscures the glory of the gospel and weakens its power and appeal (1) by denying to Christ His chief glory—the bestowal of life eternal upon the righteous, and (2) by denying His ultimate triumph in the destruction of all His foes. That is why we stand upon the Bible platform of Conditionalism. That is why we are Conditionalists.

PART III

Historical Development of Innate- Immortality Concept (900 B.C. to the Time of Christ)

*Rise of Platonic Postulate and Penetration
Into Jewry*

IMPACT OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY ON EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

(Covering Descriptions for Pictorial Chart I)

1. **THREEFOLD ORIGIN OF IMMORTAL-SOULIST CONCEPT.**—Pictorial Chart I on the following pages affords a compact panoramic view of the battle of the centuries over the origin, nature, and destiny of man, extending from 900 B.C. to A.D. 600. With rootage in the ethnic religious concepts of India, Persia, and Egypt, and embracing Immortal-Soulism with a decidedly pantheistic tinge—and involving emanation from the All-Soul, pre-existence, reincarnation, transmigration, reabsorption, and Persian Dualism—these concepts penetrated the earliest Greek cults and mysteries (Dionysiac, Orphic, and Eleusinian), which followed the Greek poets Homer and Hesiod, who also held to the continuing persistence of the soul, believed imprisoned in human bodies.

Then follows a series of conflicting schools of Greek *speculative* philosophy—the Ionic, Pythagorean, Eleatic, et cetera—between 640 and 550 B.C., each having Immortal-Soulism as the common denominator but infused with varying degrees of pantheism, emanation, pre-existence, reincarnation, and Dualism.

2. **PLATONISM—SUMMIT OF HUMAN REASONING.**—Next, in reaction, the Sophists with their skepticism and the Atomists with their materialism well-nigh halted this *speculative* philosophy. Nevertheless, under PLATO, Greek *systematic* philosophy reached the summit of human reasoning on human destiny, yet retained the previous notions of pre-existence and successive incarnations of the immortal and indestructible soul, but now with *eternal persistence of personality*, as well as punishment for the wicked.

However, a second reaction set in, spearheaded by ARISTOTLE, who denied the theory of pre-existence and reincarnation and decried the persistence of the personal or individual immortality concept—with further repudiations by the Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics. Greek philosophy was thus thrown into a confusion that persisted throughout the Roman writers. It became marked by pathetic despair and was eventually recast through eclectic selection and reorganization into the powerful Neoplatonic School of Philosophy.

3. **PENETRATES JEWRY DURING INTER-TESTAMENT PERIOD.**—Meantime, in the inter-Testament period two groups of Jewish Apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writers appeared, during the last two centuries B.C. and the first century A.D. The earlier writers maintained the Conditionalist position of their forefathers—and this line culminated in the Conditionalist witness of the *Dead Sea* scrolls.

The second paralleling group, but appearing fifty years later, reflected the Greek survival-of-the-soul concept, prayers for the dead, outright immortality of the soul, and denial of the resurrection. This Immortal-Soulist group came to climax with the powerful PHILO of Alexandria, who allegorized the Old Testament to bring it into essential accord with Platonic Greek philosophy, with its emanationism, pre-existence, reincarnation, unbodied souls, and eternal punishment. And PHILO (d. c. A.D. 47) was clearly the precursor of the Neoplatonism of the early Christian Era.

4. **CHRIST IMPLANTS CONDITIONALISM IN APOSTOLIC RANKS.**—At that very time Christ and the apostles appeared in Palestine, confirming, clarifying, and enlarging the Conditionalist teaching of the Old Testament, with immortality through Christ for the righteous only, bestowed as a gift at the resurrection, and with unrepentant sinners to be ultimately destroyed.

Thus there is essential Conditionalist unity and continuity between the Old Testament and the New. This view continued intact throughout all the Apostolic Fathers, and in a conspicuous line of Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Justin, Irenaeus, Novatian, Arnobius, Lactantius, et cetera).

5. **INNATE IMMORTALITY BELATEDLY INFILTRATES CHURCH.**—Not until c. A.D. 180 did ATHENAGORAS become the first *Christian* writer to claim the soul to be innately immortal, which Platonic term and concept TERTULLIAN developed into

(Continued on page 528)

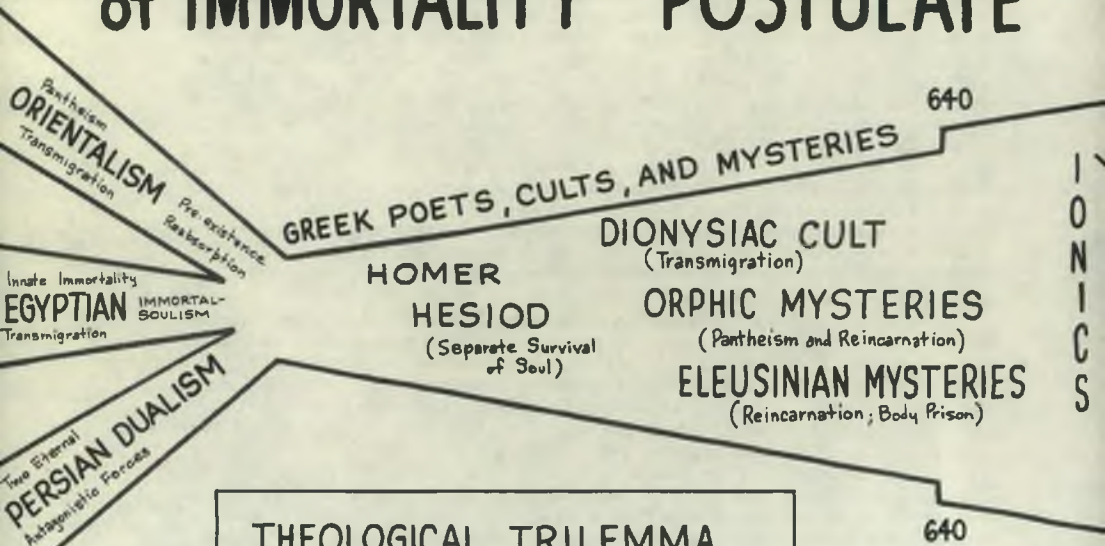


AGE-OLD CONFLICT OVER

A BATTLEGROUND OF THE CENTURIES

• A THEOLOGICAL TRILEMMA •

DEVELOPMENT and PENETRATION of IMMORTALITY POSTULATE



- THEOLOGICAL TRILEMMA**
- ① **CONDITIONALIST**
 - ② **ETERNAL TORMENTIST**
 - ③ **UNIVERSAL RESTORATIONIST**



Designed by Le Roy E. Froom, 1964

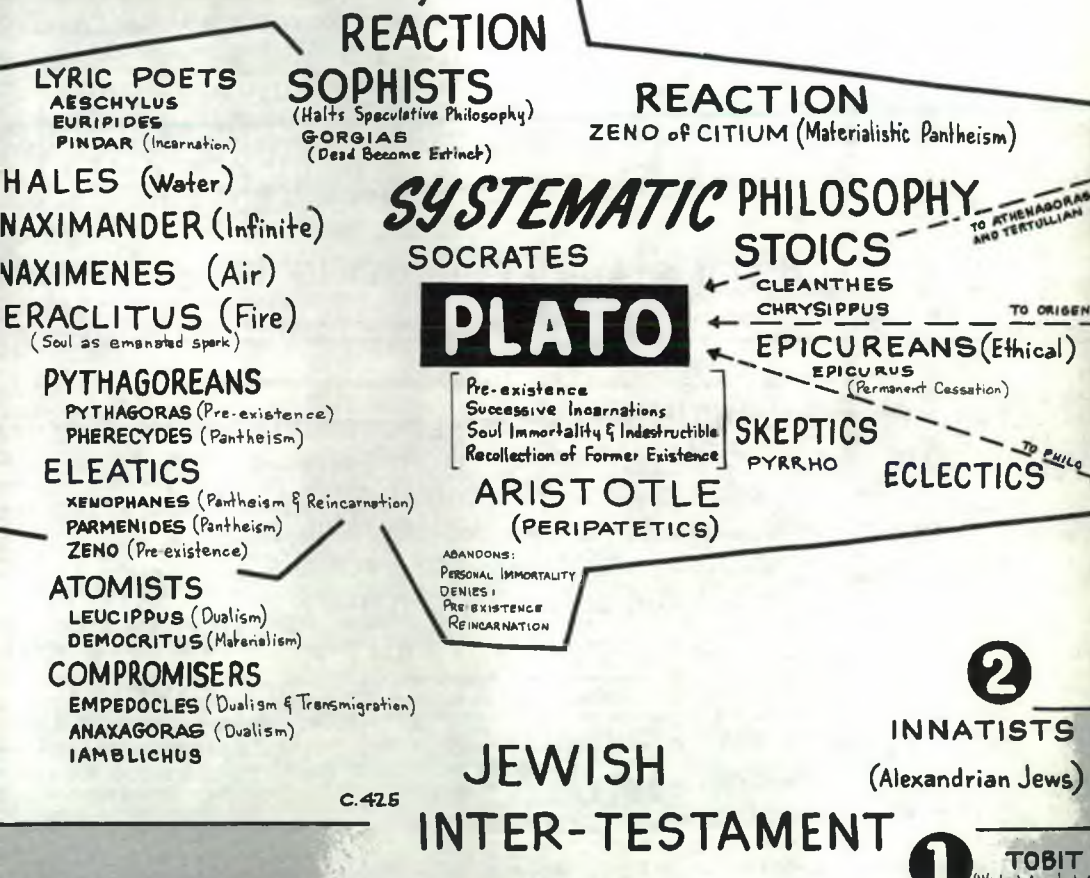
THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES
THE LAW - THE PROPHETS - THE

MAN'S NATURE and DESTINY

SPECULATIVE SCHOOLS OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Greek Philosophy's Four Problems

1. Origin of the World
2. Nature of the Soul
3. Existence of God
4. Criteria of Truth



WRITINGS

(OLD TESTAMENT CANON CLOSES)

TWO SCHOOLS DEVELOP

100

BC AD

100

200

NEW TESTAMENT CANON

1

CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY

THEOLOGICAL TRILEMMA

- 1 CONDITIONALISM
- 2 ETERNAL TORMENTISM
- 3 UNIVERSAL RESTORATIONISM

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES

APOSTOLIC FATHERS

- CLEMENT of ROME (Immortality a Gift)
- IGNATIUS (Sleep)
- BARNABAS (Eternal Death)
- HERMAS (Wicked Consumed)
- POLYCARP (Resurrection Sole Question)
- DIOGNETUS (Terminated)
- DIDACHE

ATHENAGOR

FATAL GAP ONE CENTURY LATE
1ST USES OF IMMORTAL SOUL (Immortal Soul Import PSEUDO-CLEMENT)

FROM PLATO
RADICAL DEPARTURES
FROM APOSTOLIC
PLATFORM

UNIVERSAL INNATE IMMORTALITY

RECASTING AND REGROUPING (Eclectic)

(Indefeasible Immortality Centers in North Africa)

ROMAN WRITERS

- LUCRETIOUS (Eternal Sleep)
- VERGIL (World Soul)
- EPICETUS (Refusion)
- TACITUS (Fatalism)

- HORACE (Eternal Sleep)
- PLINY (Pantheism)
- (Reabsorption) (Everlasting Sleep)
- MANILIUS (Pantheism)
- OVID (Divine Spark)
- MARCUS AURELIUS
- CICERO (Pre-existence)
- CATO (Death Utter End)
- JUVENAL (Everlasting Sleep)
- CATULLUS (Eternal Night)
- SENECA (Stoic)
- PLUTARCH

PAGAN NEO-PLATONIC SCHOOL

- LUCIUS APULIUS (World Soul)
- NUMENSIUS (Incarnation Rush)
- AMMONIUS SACCAS (Neo-Platonism)
- PLOTINUS (Emanation Dualism Reabsorption)

PATHETIC DESPAIR PREPONDERANT

JUBILEES (Soul Survives) Resurrection Abandoned
I MACCABEES (Innate Immortality) Prayers for the Dead
WISDOM (Contradictions)

JUDITH

IV MACCABEES

ALLEGORIZED O.T.

PHILO
JOSEPHUS

- (Emanation)
- (Pre-existence)
- (Incarnations)
- (Unbodied Souls)
- (Eternal Punishment)

SIBYLLINES (Man Mortal) Wicked to Ashes

ETHIOPIE ENOCH (Wicked to Ashes)
SLAVONIC ENOCH

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

II ESDRAS (Sleepers Called Forth; Wicked Extinguished)

SYRIAC BARUCH (Righteous Sleep; Punishment Terminates)

Righteous Live Forever
Wicked Cease to Exist
Wrongs Disappears Forever

PORPHYRY (Universal)

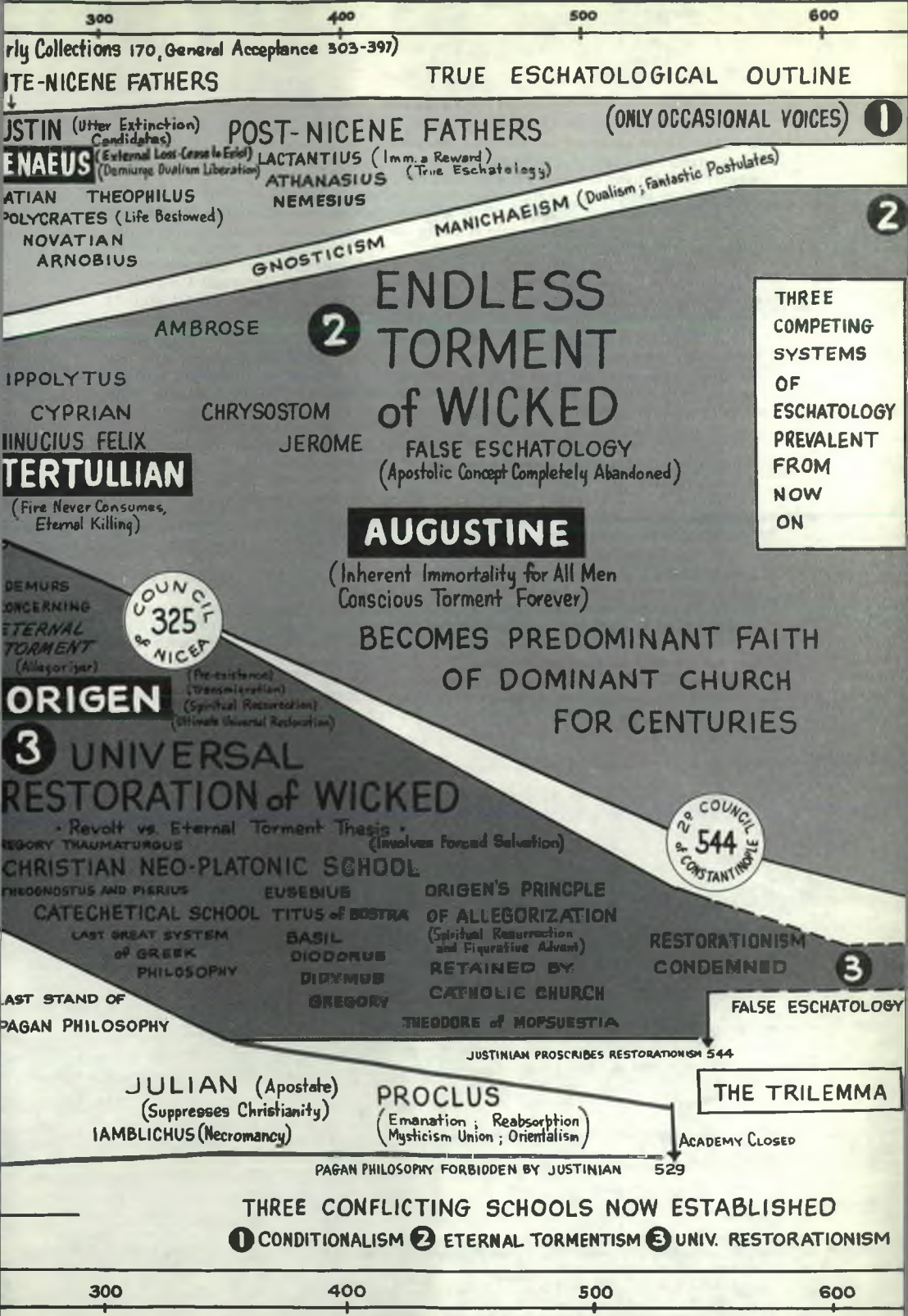
(IMMORTAL-SOULISM BECOMES PREPONDERANT)

100

BC AD

100

200



THREE
COMPETING
SYSTEMS
OF
ESCHATOLOGY
PREVALENT
FROM
NOW
ON

COUNCIL
325
of
NICEA

COUNCIL
544
of
CONSTANTINOPLE

THE TRILEMMA

THREE CONFLICTING SCHOOLS NOW ESTABLISHED
1 CONDITIONALISM 2 ETERNAL TORMENTISM 3 UNIV. RESTORATIONISM

a system based on *universal* Innate Immortality for sinners as well as saints, and thus involving Eternal Torment for the incorrigibly wicked—which doctrine is simply the continuation of Persian Dualism.

But, in protesting against this dogma of eternal torture (with a fire that renews but does not consume as it burns), ORIGEN, the Christian Neoplatonic philosopher of Alexandria, while holding the identical universal Innate-Immortality postulate—derived directly from Plato and indirectly through Philo—and now allegorizing the New Testament truths of the resurrection and the Second Advent, developed the rival school of the ultimate Universal Restoration of all the wicked, which involved the enforced final salvation of all sinners, including the devil himself.

6. ETERNAL-TORMENT DOGMA ASCENDANT BY A.D. 600.—However, it was Tertullianism, with its Eternal-Torment corollary, that spread relentlessly, later augmented by the powerful pen of AUGUSTINE, until it became the dominant position on the soul and its destiny. And proportionately Restorationism declined, while Conditionalism was now narrowed to a thin line of occasional voices. So by A.D. 600 the three rival "systems," or schools, had become established.

But the Conditionalist line, with its fidelity to the Word and its true eschatology, was largely in eclipse until the Protestant Reformation, as was also Restorationism (or Universalism) until post-Reformation times. Meanwhile, Tertullian-Augustinianism, boldly established on the Platonic (and Philonic) platform, prevailed for a thousand years, until the reaction and revival of Conditionalism came under the Protestant Reformation.

7. TRUTH ENTERS TWILIGHT SHADOWS.—Such is the significance of this chart. Immortal-Soulism was thus clearly conceived and brought forth by *pagan* philosophy, and adopted first by the *Alexandrian* Jews, and then accepted by Christians in Northern Africa—chiefly Tertullian of Carthage, Origen of Alexandria, and Augustine of Hippo, and their respective followers. This subsequently developed and continued on into the predominant medieval Roman Catholic position on the nature and destiny of the soul. No other conclusion can rightly be drawn that accords with the sum total of the facts of history.

Such was the situation as we enter the shadows of the Dark Ages when truth was largely silenced for centuries. The emergence is presented in volume 2, and pictured in Pictorial Chart II.

Greek Philosophy Reaches Summit of Pagan Thinking

I. Greek Thinking Exhausts Uninspired Speculative Reasoning

Centuries before the dawn of the Christian Era the Greeks developed a civilization surpassing all previous cultures. Their language was perfected into the most adequate vehicle ever devised for conveying human thought. Their religion, however, was a polytheistic personification of the powers of nature, based on a semipanthestic concept of the world. Their many gods embodied the baser, as well as the nobler, passions of the human soul. And there was little concept of God as a personality or of sin as an offense against a holy God and involving guilt.

From about 600 B.C. onward philosophy occupied an increasingly dominant place in Greek life, and began to undermine credence in the crude polytheism of the past. Such thinkers as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno well-nigh exhausted the realm of uninspired speculative reasoning. The philosophy of the fourth century was dominated by SOCRATES (c. 470-399 B.C.); nevertheless he was executed by the Athenians for his "atheism." His greatest pupil, PLATO (427-347 B.C.), founded the Older Academy. And ARISTOTLE (384-322 B.C.), pupil of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great, founded the Peripatetic (walking around) School, or Lyceum, in the grove of Lycus. These men personified the summit of pagan philosophy. Under them speculative thought provided the loftiest pagan philosophy of immortality to appear in all past time.

1. IMPRINTED IMMORTAL-SOULISM ON WORLD THOUGHT.



At the Very Zenith of Greece's Glory, Greek Thinkers Well-nigh Exhausted the Realm of Uninspired Speculative Reasoning.

—That the Greeks left their impact upon the world of thought—as pertains to the nature, origin, and destiny of man—as no other people of the past have ever done, is beyond controversy. Both their ideas and their terminology have been heavily drafted upon by the makers of early North African Christian theology, and prior to that by Philo of the Jews, likewise of Alexandria. It should be borne in mind that when Christ came, Hellenic thought ruled the world, and that world was a Roman world. Its influence has persisted through the succeeding centuries. Such is the larger background.

The doctrine of the Innate Immortality of soul both in thought and in phrase, in teaching and in terminology, is thus derived directly from Greek philosophy. Never should it be forgotten that *it was in Greece that the highest pagan development of the Immortal-Soulism concept took place*. While the thought, but not the phrase, was found among the Egyptians, both the Platonic Greek teaching and the terminology reappeared in Judaism, before, as well as after, the appearance of Christ, and even more conspicuously among Christians from the second century onward.

2. **FIRST CONFINED TO POETS AND PHILOSOPHERS; NEVER GENERALLY HELD.**—The concept of innate, indefeasible Immortality was the product of the poetry, mythology, and philosophy of Greece, however, rather than of its religion. It came through its bards and sages, not its priests and prophets. So while such speculative thought projected the theory of Immortal-Soulism, it never became general or popular, the masses holding to the old mythologies. They feared a fatal dissolution, either upon death or later. The philosophic presentation was too complex and too speculative for popular understanding or acceptance.

3. **EARLY TEACHING PORTRAYS JOYLESS AFTERWORLD.**—The prevailing attitude was devoid of personal hope. The early Hellenic teaching was dim, fragmentary, uncertain, inconsistent. It affirmed a joyless afterworld wrapped in gloom, a dark shadow of this world, where men continued to exist as wretched shades of their former selves. The issue was, Is death a state of utter unconsciousness, or annihilation, or a migration to a better world? The ancient Greeks did not think of body and soul as did the Egyptians—with continuance of the latter as dependent upon the former.

The separate existence of the soul was the most primitive Greek conception. Vague in the time of Homer (ninth century B.C.), this conception was intensified under Aeschylus and Pindar (fifth century). The later doctrine of the transmigration of souls, widely held by other peoples, had no part in the concepts of the early Greeks, under Homer and Hesiod. The primitive concept of the soul, or ghost, defined it as a sort of fine matter, like smoke, which according to Homer separates itself from the body at death. The notions of immortality were vague, as were those of future rewards and punishments—a murky abyss with "gates of iron and floors of brass," as one phrased it. Their search for immortal life after death was pathetic.

4. **FIVE STAGES IN PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT.**—Philosophy in Greece passed through several periods, or stages: (1)

Chart A

Pagan Greek Philosophers on the Immortality Issue

*Time Sequence, School of Thought, and Major Position
on Origin, Nature, and Destiny of Man*

1. **Preliminary Stage—Poets, Cults, and Mysteries**
Homer (c. 850 B.C.), epic poet—separate survival of depersonalized soul
Hesiod (8th cent.), epic poet—conscious activity of soul
Dionysiac cult (transmigration introduced)
Orphic mysteries (pantheism and reincarnation)
Eleusinian mysteries (souls must be released from body-prison)
2. **The Ionics (or Milesians)**
Thales (c. 640-546 B.C.), founder—"water," first principle
Anaximander (c. 611-547 B.C.)—"infinite," first principle
Anaximenes of Miletus (c. 500-c. 428 B.C.)—"air," first principle
Heraclitus (c. 544-c. 484 B.C.)—"eternal fire," soul an emanated spark
3. **The Pythagoreans**
Pythagoras (c. 582-496 B.C.)—pre-existence and transmigration
Pherecydes (6th cent. B.C.)—eternal souls and pantheism
4. **The Eleatics (Unity and Continuity); and Heraclitus (in Opposition)**
Xenophanes (c. 570-c. 475 B.C.), founder—pantheism and reincarnation
Parmenides (c. 540-c. 470 B.C.)—pantheistic concept
Zeno of Elea (5th cent.)—pre-existence and alternating life
5. **Tragic and Lyric Poets**
Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), tragic poet—judgment
Euripides (c. 480-406 B.C.), tragic poet—uncertainty
Pindar (c. 522-443 B.C.), greatest lyric poet—successive incarnations;
interchangeable immortality
6. **Compromise Philosophical Systems (5th cent.)**
Empedocles (c. 500-430 B.C.)—dualism, purgation, transmigration
Anaxagoras (c. 500-428 B.C.)—dualism, dissolution of soul
Iamblichus (d. c. 333 B.C.)
7. **The Atomists**
Leucippus (fl. 500 B.C.)—philosophical materialism
Democritus (460-355 B.C.)—conscious existence disappears at death
8. **The Sophists (halt speculative philosophy)**
Gorgias (c. 485-c. 380 B.C.) and Protagoras (5th cent.)—dead may
become nothing
9. **The Systematic Philosophers**
Socrates (c. 470-399 B.C.), founder, Socratic method
Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.), founder, Older Academy
Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), founder, Peripatetics
10. **The Stoics**
Zeno of Citium (c. 355-c. 263 B.C.), founder, Stoic School (materialistic
pantheism)
Cleanthes (c. 304/03-c. 233/32 B.C.), successor
Chrysippus (281/77-208/04 B.C.)
11. **The Epicureans—Ethical Period**
Epicurus (c. 342-270 B.C.), founder—permanent cessation of life
12. **The Skeptics**
Pyrrho (c. 365-c. 275 B.C.), founder—undermines Immortal-Soulism
Plutarch (c. A.D. 46-c. 120), biographer and moralist
13. **The Eclectics (and the Cynics)**
14. **The Neoplatonists**
Plotinus (c. A.D. 205-270)

The *Scientific Period*, with Heraclitus and Pythagoras (c. 510 B.C.); (2) the *Period of Enlightenment*, with transition to the study of man, under the Sophists (fifth century), and Socrates; (3) the *Systematic Philosophers*, with Plato and the Academy, with Aristotle and his Peripatetics; (4) the later *Ethical Period*, with Zeno of Citium (d. c. 263 B.C.) and the Stoics, Epicurus (d. 270 B.C.) and the Epicureans, Pyrrho (third century) and the Sceptics, and the Eclectics, with Philo (d. c. A.D. 47); and (5) finally *Neoplatonism*, beginning under Philo but developed largely under Plotinus (c. A.D. 205-270), and climaxing in the Alexandrian Philosophical School of the Church Fathers. We will trace these progressively or chronologically. (The accompanying Chart A on the opposite page will aid in following the sequence and grasping relationships.)

5. THIS CHAPTER BASED ON RECOGNIZED AUTHORITIES.—Scholars of note with no position to sustain and no cause to advocate (and not holding personally to Conditionalism) have thoroughly compassed the teachings of Greek philosophy and have come independently to similar conclusions, agreeing that the origin, nature, and destiny of man was one of Greek philosophy's primary concerns. This teaching was interwoven as a distinctive thread all through the pattern of their thought. And these scholars have left their lifelong studies and analyses on record. With characteristic thoroughness such men as Rohde, Zeller, Ritter, Preller, Fairbairn, Draper, Charles, Grube, and others have written whole books, sets of books, or chapters dealing with this aspect of Greek thought.

Heidelberg University's Dr. Erwin Rohde's exhaustive study *Psyche—The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks* ran through eight German editions. It is priceless as a reference. Berlin University's Dr. Eduard Zeller's two-volume *A History of Greek Philosophy* had four German editions.¹ And his *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*

¹ Dr. Eduard Zeller produced a whole series of volumes—*A History of Greek Philosophy* (two volumes); *The Pre-Socratic Philosophy; Socrates and the Socratic Schools; Plato and the Older Academy; A History of the Eclecticism in Greek Philosophy; Aristotle and the Early Peripatetics* (two volumes); *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*—which attest the scope of this great scholar's researches.

had thirteen German editions and at least seven American printings.

Several chapters in Dr. Andrew Fairbairn's *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History* (including two on "Belief in Immortality"), and Oxford's great scholar, Dr. R. H. Charles, in his *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, with its section "Doctrine of the Soul and the Future Life Among the Greeks," are both highly valuable. Mention should also be made of sections in Alger, Salmond, and Hudson. Such is the cumulative expert evidence available.

For example, according to the penetrating analysis of John W. Draper,² in *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, Greek philosophy is tersely summarized as revolving around "four Problems: (1) Origin of the World; (2) Nature of the Soul; (3) Existence of God; (4) Criterion of Truth."³ Such an analysis indicates the necessity of a preliminary survey of the various schools of philosophy leading up to Plato, who established the synthesized pattern that so profoundly influenced the Christian Church from the second and third centuries onward. These scholarly treatises of the past form the basis of this chapter. The positions here surveyed are therefore amply documented and cross-checked.

In view of the findings of the vast multiple research of these great Christian scholars, it is time that consideration be given to the impact that Plato and the antecedent Greek philosophers exerted upon the thinking and beliefs of the early, medieval, and modern Christian Church.

II. Preliminary Stage—Initiated by Poets, Cults, and Mysteries

1. HOMER: PERSISTENCE OF LIFE BEYOND DEATH.—About the earliest expression of belief in the persistence of *life be-*

² Dr. Draper, long of the university of the City of New York, was a scientific historian, educator, and author of texts. He produced his analytical history of philosophy in 1863.

³ John W. Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. 1, pp. viii, 207.

yond death appears in Homer and the Homeric poems (c. 850 B.C.). Apart from the question of their precise origin and authorship, and whether they sprang from earlier bards,⁴ these poems are a witness to the belief of the time. Though they contain conflicting statements, death was not believed to be the end of man; something was believed to survive. Death was not extinction, but continuance of existence. As noted, the soul is conceived to be airy and breathlike, a kind of misty double of the physical body, and superior thereto. It is all very hazy and ethereal.

Homer held that life after death was a shadowy counterpart of full-blooded bodily life on earth, a form without substance (*Iliad* 23; *Odyssey* 11), the souls fleeing to the house of Hades, gathering place for the departed. They cannot speak until a draught of living blood has restored life to them. There was nothing spiritual about Homer's souls. Dr. S. D. F. Salmond records that the Greek afterworld was—

"a joyless land, wrapt in murky gloom, the dark shadow and spent copy of the world, in which men continue to exist as the wretched images of their former selves."⁵

In Homer only one part of man's composite nature survives death. It was a sort of soul-substance—something possessing faculties that characterize conscious life. The soul, he taught, enjoys an independent and secret existence in the body, and upon the death of the body independently withdraws itself. It exercises no function of the human spirit (thought, will, emotion), which belong to the mind. And all functions of the body disappear with its dissolution into the original elements. Upon the death of the body, and entrance into Hades,⁶ the soul loses consciousness and thought (*Iliad* xxiii, 103, 104; 75, 76). It knows nothing of the upper world, and cannot return thither. And its personality does not persist.

⁴ Some, such as A. M. Fairbairn, believe Homer and Hesiod are "mythical collections" (*Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History*, p. 152).

⁵ Stewart D. F. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 129.

⁶ Cf. R. H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*; Erwin Rohde, *Psyche*; Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy* (2 vols.); Lewis Campbell, *Religion of Greek Literature*; Fairbairn, *op. cit.*

Parts of the *Odyssey* (x, xi) do suggest an occasional return of consciousness. But if immortality were vouchsafed to any individual it must be given when living, through translation to the Elysian fields. And as noted, it was the poets who were the earliest heralds of a possible immortality for man. The masses were unmoved by this sentiment, and lived and died under the terrors of a cruel fatalism.

However, according to Hesiod (eighth century), survivals of animism appear. In *Works and Days* (A.D. 109-201) death came to men of the golden race like a sleep, making them like gods and partakers in immortality. After death they became watchers over mankind, and exercised large powers. Men of the silver race had their abode under the earth, but were blessed in the underworld. Those of the bronze race became phantoms in Hades. Such were the mythical concepts of conscious and independent activity of souls after death that helped to form the early Greek doctrine of immortality.

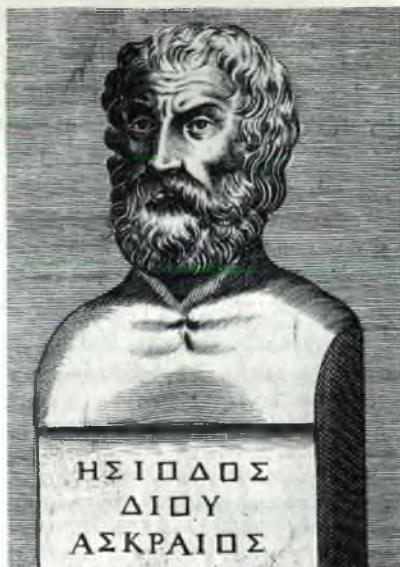
2. TRANSMIGRATION THEORY INTRODUCED BY DIONYSIAC CULT.—According to R. H. Charles, Oxford authority, the first advance step toward a developed Immortal-Soulism in Greece, of which we have knowledge, came through the Dionysiac cult⁷ of Thrace. This was based on the presupposition of the original kinship of the gods and man. The Dionysiacs taught that souls retain consciousness after death, and that through certain rites, ceremonies, and ecstasies man becomes one with the gods.

“Immortality” and “divinity” were used as interchangeable terms. At death the soul bursts the fetters of the body. The soul has a real existence and continuance, and returns to earth for other incarnations. Thus the doctrine of transmigration of souls, later to appear again and again, came to be adopted, with the soul passing through successive incarnations.⁸ So the concept of the future life began to be transformed by the Dionysiacs, a secret eschatological cult.⁹

⁷ *Dionysiac* pertains to the festivals of the Eleusinian Mysteries, in honor of the Olympian god, Dionysus, later called Bacchus.

⁸ See Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-266; Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 146; Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-188.

⁹ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 179.



Hesiod, Another Early Poet, Likewise Taught the Conscious and Independent Activity of the Soul After Death.



Poets Like Homer Were the Earliest Greek Proponents of the Persistence of the Soul Beyond Death.

3. ORPHICS: PERMEATED WITH PANTHEISM AND REINCAR-NATIONISM.—Soon new elements were brought in from the *Orphic Mysteries* (secret rites for the initiated from the mythical prophet and musician, Orpheus of Thrace) and from the *Eleusinian Mysteries*, coming from Eleusis in ancient Attica. The Orphic Mysteries differed from the Eleusinian in their foreign origin and *distinctly pantheistic basis*.¹⁰ They buttressed this new notion of the future life by insisting that the soul is divine. Hence the concept of the soul as the highest, or divine, part of man was imported into Greece by these mystic Orphic teachers, whose doctrines originally came from the East.

The immortality they taught was not a pale reflection of the earthly life, but *a release, or deliverance, of the soul from the body*—the body being considered a prison or tomb.¹¹ And

¹⁰ Pantheism—from the Greek *pan* (all) and *Theos* (God), or “all God”—the belief or theory that God and the universe are identical. Pantheistic systems go back to earliest times, especially in Hinduism. Pantheism interprets the universe in terms of God, or God in terms of the universe, and is accordingly religious or materialistic in emphasis.

¹¹ G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought*, p. 121; Charles, *The Doctrine of the Future Life*, pp. 146, 147; Fairbanks, *A Handbook of Greek Religion*, pp. 244-246.

the chain of rebirths involved must be broken if the soul is to find freedom with the gods.

The essence of Orphic emphasis was that the initiate might, by pure life and asceticism and mystical ceremonies, achieve mystic identification with the divine nature, and thus perfect his immortal character—not as the Dionysiacs, who often sought to develop this immortality through orgiastic ecstasy. More than that, in Orphic teaching transmigration (metempsychosis)¹² comes to be not merely a means of preserving the vitality of the soul but also a punishment and discipline for the soul.

However, it is alleged that the soul does not attain its highest freedom until freed from this cycle of rebirths, and lives eternally in God.¹³ After many incarnations it rises to perfection and is *absorbed, or reabsorbed, into the divine*. By this time there is a well-defined doctrine of the origin, essence, and destiny of the soul. The Eastern tinge is unmistakable.

As indicated, under the Orphics there came in an "indissoluble connection" between guilt and expiation. The soul meets with retributive judgment in the "lower world." Hades becomes the intermediate abode of the soul, where it is purified, until time for its return to the upper life. Then at last, when "fully cleansed" through its "cycle of rebirths," "it ascends . . . to enjoy a never-ending existence with God." Thus the soul, pure or impure, is held to be not only immortal but eternal—and consequently without beginning or end.

According to the exhaustive researches of Erwin Rohde, the Orphic poems and theogony combined *transmigration* with the *divinity of the soul*, and stressed the migration of the soul through many mortal bodies. It is essential to note that the soul is portrayed as part of the all-embracing Divine Essence, with recurring incarnations—traversing a great "Circle of Necessity" in the "Wheel of Birth."¹⁴ It is a cycle of "becoming" and "perishing," perpetually repeated.

¹² Metempsychosis, or transmigration—the passing of the soul at death into another body, the migration from one body to another until complete purification has been achieved.

¹³ Cf. Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-347; Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 146, 147.

¹⁴ Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-347.

There is alternating pollution and purification for these deathless souls. The soul is imprisoned in a "cell" (body), from which it is periodically set free—only soon to be imprisoned again. So it is successively fettered and unfettered. As the soul is immortal, even the wicked cannot perish entirely. But no Eternal Torment in hell was taught, only repeated transmigrations. Such is the pagan foundation.

And Dr. Eduard Zeller, former professor of philosophy in the universities of Berlin and Heidelberg, points out the fact that in Greek literature pantheism first clearly appears in a fragment of these Orphic poems, and that the pantheistic strain runs through the whole Orphic cosmogony, or theory of the origin of the world. And he cites Herodotus as declaring that the Orphics obtained the transmigration concept from Egypt—or more accurately, from Egypt and India. So it came to pass that in due time these concepts passed from the mysteries to Greek philosophy.¹⁵

Furthermore, according to Fairbairn,¹⁶ the Orphic theosophy¹⁷ was a "speculation amalgam" of Greek, Oriental, and Egyptian elements, its speculative elements taking on this crude pantheism. The universe, they held—the earth, starry heavens, sun, and man—issued from Zeus. And the generation principle of the universe embraces the generated, or universe. Orphic pantheism was thus a distinctive development, with its characteristic phraseology. And pantheism always involved metempsychosis.

While there are new forms, the being is held to be always the same. So man, emanating from the Supreme One, has a cycle of appearances. The spirit, or soul, is to be separated from the body-prison in which it is confined because of past sins. Then at death the soul enters Hades to be rewarded or

¹⁵ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 64-74, 101.

¹⁶ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-183.

¹⁷ *Theosophy*—the intuitive knowledge of the Divine by mystical insight and philosophical speculation, and covering such religious and philosophical systems as pantheism and natural mysticism. It thus includes the teachings of Buddha, Plotinus, and the Gnostics. Theosophists deny both the personality of God and the continuing *personal*, or individual, immortality of man.

punished, and returned to earth. Absolutions and rites purify the soul.

Summarizing then: In the Orphics, the Innate-Immortality concept is entered upon as a new stage of development, the soul being to man what God is to the world. Moreover, death destroys only the prison. While there is continuance, the individual is, as Fairbairn puts it, "only an emanation from a deified universe, revolving in a cycle of necessity."¹⁸

III. Philosophical Developments—Ionic, Eleatic, and Pythagorean Positions

I. IONIAN SCHOOL: "AIR," "WATER," "FIRE," "INFINITE."
—As stated, Greek philosophy, which developed from the Greek poets, began as an attempt to find natural causes for the phenomena of the world and the universe. The earliest school of Greek philosophy was founded at Miletus, the Ionian capital. It is therefore called both the Milesian and the Ionian School. The Ionian view was materialistic, in that it sought to reduce the baffling cause of all things to one underlying substance with mathematical ratios and proportions.

THALES (c. 640-546 B.C.), the first Greek philosopher and one of the "seven sages,"¹⁹ was the first to attempt a scientific explanation of the world by seeking the unifying principle of existence.²⁰ Believing the world to be a unit, and beginning with physical speculation (possibly influenced by Egypt and its fertilizing Nile), Thales sought in *water* the source of life and the first principle of all things. To him "soul" was the synonym of life and the cause of motion.²¹

But three rival views soon proposed other solutions. ANAXIMENES (c. 500-c. 428 B.C.) asserted that the human soul consists of atmospheric "air" (airlike), and material life consists of inhaling and exhaling it. When that process stops,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁹ Zeller, *Outline of the History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 35, 42, 43.

²⁰ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

²¹ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 95, 96.

death comes. He also held that "air" is the "soul" of the world, and the Universal Being was identified with the air we breathe. But ANAXIMANDER (c. 611-547 B.C.), of Miletus, held that all things arose by separation from a universal mixture of all, which basic substance he called "The Infinite," characterized by internal energy and absolute unchangeability.²² On the contrary, HERACLITUS (c. 544-c. 484 B.C.), of Ephesus, held the first principle to be "fire."

With some the "soul" took on new meaning, being completely identified with the mind, the human powers of thought and will. Its individual existence after death was inconceivable. With such, the soul was merely a function of the various elements of the body—a transient individualism that terminated at death. These are all speculative philosophies.

2. ELEATIC SCHOOL: PHILOSOPHY BECOMES PANTHEISTIC.—The polemic of the Eleatic School (named from Elea), and founded by Xenophanes and Parmenides, with Zeno, was against the popular polytheism. It was ostensibly searching for the permanent and indestructible amid the perishable and evanescent. The Eleatics taught that all things were a unit, and that unit was God—and so the view was definitely pantheistic. They stressed the unity and continuity of the world, as touching God and man. They held to eternal and changeless reality of being and the unreality of change—change being only apparent and delusive. Everything that is exists; therefore "being" is indestructible. Souls go from light to darkness and back again.²³ But the pantheistic concepts of this school left "no room for the future individual existence of the soul."²⁴

XENOPHANES (c. 570-475 B.C.) put his doctrines into practical forms, differing from Homer and Hesiod. He proclaimed God an all-powerful Being, existing from eternity. Yet his was not a monotheistic position. His was a philosophical pantheistic

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 99, 104-106.

²³ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 186, 187.

²⁴ Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 148.

god. The one principle, or power, was the same as the one immutable, material universe, the substance of which, having existed from eternity, must be identical with God—otherwise there would be two Omnipresents.

To him, God was the world of nature, underived and imperishable. Thus he abandoned the pursuit of *visible nature* and turned to an investigation of "Being" and of God.²⁵ Zeller observes, "Xenophanes is the first philosophical representative of the pantheism, which also underlies the system of Heracleitus."²⁶

PARMENIDES (c. 540-c. 470 B.C.), stressing unity and permanence of "Being," taught the pre-existence of the soul and its survival after the death of the body²⁷—a holdover from the Orphic and Pythagorean schools. His pantheism appears in the declaration that the All of the cosmos is thought and intelligence. And by placing "thought" and "being" in parallelism with each other, and contending that it is for the sake of *being* that *thought* exists, he sets them forth as one.²⁸

He also associates light with "Being," and night with "Non-Being," and seems to have conceived the beginning of the human race as a development from primitive slime, brought about by the heat of the sun. And he insistently derived the life of the soul from the mixture of substances in the body.²⁹ Such were his curious concepts.

ZENO of Elea (fifth century) boldly defended his predecessors' doctrine of the "motionless All-One." And in dealing with the origin and nature of the soul he too held it to be the "resultant of a material mixture," not an "independent substance." Nevertheless, the Eleatics inconsistently held that the "deity that rules the world 'at one time sends it [the "pre-existent"] out of the Invisible into the Visible, and at another time back again.'" (By "Visible" is meant the life *in* the body.)

²⁵ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 120, 121.

²⁶ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, p. 106.

²⁷ Charles, *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 148.

²⁸ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 121.

²⁹ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 594, 602.



Heraclitus Held the Soul to Be an Emanation From the Universal Soul Which Comprises Everything and Is Imperishable.

And this process, it is added, is "several times repeated, in those two worlds"—an alternating life. That too, of course, is straight "Orphic-Pythagorean theosophy."³⁰

3. HERACLITUS: SOUL IS IMMORTAL SPARK FROM ETERNAL FIRE.—Opposing Thales' position on "air" as the unifying principle of existence, HERACLITUS (c. 544-c. 484 B.C.) held ever-living, divine "fire" to be the animating principle of the universe. And of this infinite fire the soul is a spark or portion³¹—and the purer the fire, the more perfect the soul. Consequently, the perishable body was despised. The soul of man is an emanation from the universal fire, or soul, which comprises everything and sustains all, and is imperishable. Thus man and the gods are said to be akin. "The very birth of man is . . . a birth into death," but the soul lives on.

Ritter cites Heraclitus as saying that "death is in our life, and life in our death." Again, "Men are mortal gods, the gods immortal men, living in man's death, and dying in man's life." The heaven of the Ionic was "reabsorption into the divine reason."³²

³⁰ Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

³¹ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 187, 188.

³² Ritter, *The History of Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 250, 251.

In opposition to the Eleatics, Heraclitus denied that permanence exists. He insisted on the changeability of all things, everything being in a state of "continual flux," of movement and flow, with continuing growth and decay and balance in these changes. Zeller stresses Heraclitus' belief in the pre-existence of the soul and its continuance after death. While there are periodic conflagrations of the world, the soul survives them all. Life is preserved by the renewal of the divine fire. Souls enter bodies because they require a change. They become weary of the same state. And the universal soul is simply this "divine animating fire." Souls enter the human body from a higher existence.³³

Here are key expressions from Rohde's highly documented, masterful survey: "Living is becoming, changing, becoming something different without cessation." "Fire and psyche [soul] are interchangeable terms." ³⁴ "A portion of his [god's] universal wisdom is living in the soul of man." The soul is "a portion of the universal Fire." "It absorbs fresh fire from the living Fire of the universe that surrounds it." Moreover, the soul does not "maintain itself as a single person," but "is in reality a series of souls and personalities, one taking the place of another and ousting and being ousted in turn." ³⁵

"There is no such thing as death in the absolute sense—an end followed by no beginning." For man, death is "only a point where one condition of things gives way to another . . . involving death for one but simultaneously bringing birth and life for another." ³⁶ And finally, "The soul of man has a claim to immortality only as an emanation of the universal Reason, and shares the immortality which belongs to it." ³⁷

That is the gross pagan concept held by Heraclitus, derived from the Mysteries, with rank pantheism, emanation, transmigration, and reabsorption with its loss of continuing personality.

³³ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, pp. 1-114, especially pp. 79-87.

³⁴ Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 368, 369.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 370, 371.



Pythagoras Likewise Taught the Eternity of the Soul and Successive Transmigrations.

4. PYTHAGORAS: ETERNITY OF SOUL AND SUCCESSIVE TRANSMIGRATIONS.—The teaching of PYTHAGORAS (c. 582-496 B.C.), founder of the Pythagorean society, or brotherhood, was characterized by a pronounced metempsychosis, derived from the Orphics. In fact, Pythagoras simply philosophized the Orphic theosophy. Pythagoras taught that God was the great fountain, or immortal mind, whence the minds or souls of all intelligent beings emanated; that the soul existed as an entity before it animated the body; that it will transmigrate successively through different bodies until it returns to God, its original source, and is *reabsorbed into His essence*. He held the soul to be material, not pure spirit.

Souls are said to be confined to bodies because of previous sins, and are released through the death of the body. Pythagoras thus affirmed the continued "being" of the soul,³⁸ each soul returning to an earthly life.³⁹ Thus the soul is an "imperishable essence," as no real entity is ever either made or destroyed.

Pythagoras emphasized the harmony of the spheres, with mathematics as the basis of his speculative system. Numbers were the substance of things, and the harmony of the celestial

³⁸ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-186.

³⁹ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 486.

spheres was based on the assumption that they were separated by intervals, corresponding to various lengths of instrumental strings, and thus produced harmony. The universe is in an "eternal flux," with *persons*, as well as events, repeated in "regular cycles." The Pythagoreans laid much stress on opposites, a concept likewise found in contemporary Gnosticism. Embracing these tenets, aristocratic secret societies, or brotherhoods, were formed, adhering to a rigorous code.

According to Rohde's researches, Pythagoras taught that the soul of man is the "double" of the physical body, cast down from the heights for punishment, and thus confined to "custody" of a body. But a soul has no real or necessary connection with the particular body in which it dwells, but may possess any body. When death separates the soul from the body there is first a period of purification in Hades, and then a return to earth, to be reborn into another body. This is repeated many times. Finally, after a sequence of transmigrations it is released from its earthly pilgrimage and is restored to a divine existence.

The Pythagorean goal of the soul was this ultimate restoration to the divine state with the gods—an "emancipated existence as a bodiless spirit."⁴⁰ Thus the chain of deaths and rebirths is broken, with escape from the cycle as the ultimate benefit.⁴¹ That was the sole hope of escape.

To put it another way, Pythagoras held that "number is the essence or first principle of things"—"All comes from one," and "God embraces all and actuates all, and is but one." This, of course, is sheer pantheism, doubtless derived from Egypt and India.⁴² "So long as the soul is in the body it requires the body . . . ; separated from the body it leads an incorporeal life in the higher world"⁴³—a view later embraced by Plato. Pythagoras likewise held the theory of the "music of the spheres," and the soul as the harmony of the body, like the melody of a lyre.

⁴⁰ Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 376, 398, note 50.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 375, 376, 399, note 50.

⁴² Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 111-115.

⁴³ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 483.

Sophists React Against Conflicting Speculative Schools

In order for us to sense the significance of the later postulates of Platonism that ultimately became dominant, it is essential to have a panoramic view of the developing philosophy of ancient Greece as concerns the soul and its fate. In spots it may seem a bit tedious and trivial. But such a survey is necessary if we are realistically to trace the rise of Platonism to its pre-eminence.

I. Paralleling Tragic and Lyric Poets Buttress Positions

1. TIDES OF POETIC OPINION EBB AND FLOW.—The lyric poets kept within the Homeric framework, and the dramas of AESCHYLUS (525-456 B.C.), greatest of Greek tragic poets, likewise mirrored the faith of the populace, unmodified by alien influences. But these are the "princely dead," not the common run. They reproduced the old Homeric conceptions of Hades and the soul—the soul not being a shadow, but a real, actual being. But its state was cold and dreary. Their only light was commingled with darkness. The underworlds and afterworlds were retributive, but the penalties of guilt overshadowed the rewards of righteousness. Souls continue semiconsciously after death, their forms resembling their earthly state.¹

To give life to the personages in his dramas, Aeschylus

¹ A. M. Fairbairn, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 194, 195.

took the legends of the past, adjusting them to current thought, and put them in the setting of his own convictions. Sometimes there is a twilight existence, as in Homer. But speculation on the soul after death did not interest him.² However, there is a judgment beyond death, in Hades. But this judgment only completed the retribution generally executed on earth.

EURIPIDES (c. 480-406 B.C.), another Athenian tragic dramatist, sounds no clear note. His dramas likewise reflect the popular view as well as the variant conflicting views of the Orphics, philosophers, and Sophists—sometimes doubting, sometimes affirming, the possibilities of the other world. They sway to and fro, the whole question of the afterlife being left unanswered. At death the soul returns to the air, its creative element, parting with its independent existence. Man is nothing, and sinks into nothingness.³

2. PINDAR: SOUL IS "IMAGE OF ETERNITY." While philosophers represented the personal views of a few elite, the paralleling tragic and lyric poets were more national in their portrayals, largely repeating the mythology of former times. PINDAR (c. 522-443 B.C.), pre-eminent lyric poet of Thebes, drew upon both the old Orphic theosophy and the newborn philosophy for his portrayals of the soul and afterlife.

Two distinct, irreconcilable views are presented. Sometimes they are Homeric, with Hades as the everlasting abode of the shades; in others the Orphic type prevails. Thus the soul is the "invisible double" of the man, largely dormant during earth's activities—an "image of eternity." It springs from the gods (*Frag.* 131), and what survives in the other world is the soul itself, not a shadow-image.

There are moral awards, the good going to dwell among the gods, with descent into a body being the result of some ancient guilt. After death retributive judgment follows in Hades to atone for past offenses, and the condemned are plunged into Tartarus. The soul must be embodied at least

² Rohde, *Psyche*, pp. 421-425.

³ Salmond, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 139.

three times before it can hope for an end of its earthly course. The past life determines the conditions of the present, and the present fixes those of the future. After a period of years in Hades the purified soul can ascend and enter the "Isles of the Blest" (*Ol.* ii, 57-60, 69-75).⁴ In Pindar this course of the soul appears, one ode telling of the mythical interchangeable immortality, alternately in Heaven and Hades (10th *Nemean Ode*).

The soul, descending from the gods, remains alive after the death of the body. If it does not find a suitable resting place, it must live again in another earthly body until a third faultless life ends its earthly course. Thrice tried by birth and death, the soul, if it keeps free from sin, ascends to the upper world to live in the "Islands of the Blest."⁵ That, of course, is out-and-out transmigratism simply in Greek form. As Zeller puts it, punishment thus gives opportunity for happiness in the hereafter, which concept was acquired from the Orphics.⁶

According to Rohde's minute examination, Pindar teaches that, "after its separation from the body, the soul disappears in the underworld." This other life, which is "everlasting and immortal," dwells for a time in a mortal body because of "ancient guilt." Hades, with its dark rivers of inky blackness in Tartarus, awaits the impious after death. Rohde summarizes Pindar's position as a divine origin for the soul, wanderings through several bodies (incarnations), judgment in Hades, assignments to the upper or lower worlds, and at last escape from the constricting circle of births, to become a "god."⁷ Such, he avers, is Pindar's doctrine of the soul.

II. Inevitable Reaction Under Compromisers, Atomists, and Sophists

I. EMPEDOCLES: DOOMED BY SIN TO TRANSMIGRATIONS.—

⁴ See Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 150, 151; Salmond, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-142; William R. Alger, *The Destiny of the Soul. A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 182-184.

⁵ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 192, 193.

⁶ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 71.

⁷ Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-418.

The first philosopher to introduce the conception of the four elements—fire, air, water, and earth—as *divine, eternal forces* was EMPEDOCLES (c. 500-430 B.C.), of Sicily. To these he added the two primary principles of love and hate—love the creative power, hate the destroyer. Between these there is unremitting strife. But in his mystic theology Empedocles was definitely allied with the Orphic-Pythagorean positions.⁸ He did not found a school but, like Pythagoras and Heraclitus, held to the literal transmigration of human souls through the bodies of animals and men, and the subsequent return of the purified souls to the gods, from which they originally came. And Empedocles held to the “immutable decree” of Fate, including the banishment of the demons for “30,000 seasons from among the Blessed.”⁹

Empedocles presented a singular dualistic view—a Dualism of the inner life detected in Homer. The office of the soul is neither perception nor thought, both of which, he held, are merely functions of the body. Perception attests divine existence in the past. Thought, existing side by side with the soul in man, perishes with the body. But the soul, if not immortal, is at least long-lived. The postulate of transmigration naturally formed a part of his system. But between its various incorporations the soul does not descend into an underground Hades, as in Orphic and Pythagorean belief. And when all elements return to their original unity, all souls—and even the gods—are reunited in the divine universal spirit, to appear in a newly restored world.¹⁰

Empedocles held, further, that *nothing can begin which formerly was not, and nothing that exists can perish*. Man's original state was sinless. But man fell, and he too “was doomed to wander thrice ten thousand years apart from the blessed”—a “fugitive from the gods, and an outcast” dwelling in perpetual strife. As hate dominates, motion is ceaseless and rest is im-

⁸ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, pp. 117-184; *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 72-75; Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. 1, pp. 123, 124.

⁹ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, p. 172.

¹⁰ See Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 149, 150.

possible. But in the coexisting sphere of love, when the pious die they become "deathless gods," and no longer mortals." Thus, "man is a fallen god condemned to wander on earth, sky-aspiring but sense-clouded." Purged by penance, he returns to his former godlike experience.

Empedocles held that reality is "*Many*," not "*One*." And permanence belongs to the principal elements which change to their shifting relations. Earlier it was felt that matter is alive, but Parmenides removed that conception. And now Empedocles added these two agencies, love and hate, as controlling the four elements. The history of the universe is, he held, oscillation to and fro between complete accord and total disharmony. So while not belonging organizationally to the Pythagorean School, Empedocles adopted its teachings on the soul. Death would free the soul from its "last corporeal envelope." It never again would enter a body, but "live for ever in freedom and divinity."¹² Such was the Immortal-Soulism support given by Empedocles.

2. ANAXAGORAS: DUALISM AND DISSOLUTION OF THE SOUL.—

Fifty years after Pythagoras, his successor, ANAXAGORAS, of Ionia (c. 500-428 B.C.), visited Egypt, which visit was not without its effects upon his thinking. The fundamental principle of his philosophy was the unchangeability of the universe as a whole, or in other words, the *eternity of matter*. As he expressed it:

"Wrongly do the Greeks suppose that aught begins or ceases to be, for nothing comes into being or is destroyed, but all is an aggregation or secretion of pre-existent things, so that all *becoming* might more correctly be called *becoming-mixed*, and all corruption *becoming-separate*."¹³

Anaxagoras also became persuaded that "mind" is completely detached from matter, and acts upon matter with intelligence and design in the formation of the universe.¹⁴ The initial

¹¹ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 188, 189. Cf. Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 501.

¹² Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 379, 380.

¹³ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 106. (Italics supplied.) See also Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 189, 190.

¹⁴ William Enfield, *The History of Philosophy From the Earliest Periods*, book 2, chap. 3, p. 87.

moving force, which brought order out of chaos, he designated as "Intellect" (*Nous*), or "all-pervading Mind." Rejecting the fate concept, he imputed it to reason. "Mind" is infinite and absolute, and Anaxagoras made no distinction between "mind" and "soul." He also held to a Dualism, as indicated by the "moving force" and the "moved mass."

And he stressed the opposition between the intellectual and the physical. Reason, he said, was the prime mover, employing air, water, and fire as agents. Such was Anaxagoras' cosmogony. Compounds were not formation, but arrangements. Thus all parts of the animal body pre-exist in food, and are merely collected therefrom. In fact, all the phenomena of life are explained in his Magian doctrine of Dualism between mind and matter.¹⁵

Rohde calls him "the first decisive and conscious dualist among Greek philosophers."¹⁶ He sets "mind" and "matter" over against each other, and mind is power of thought and force of will. Self-existent mind influences matter without itself being moved by it. Now, as animated beings spring from the "World-Mind," individual souls are therefore not self-existent after the dissolution of the "united." Thus "the view is definitely ascribed to him that *separation from the body is also 'the soul's death.'*" He did not, however, teach "the indestructibility of the individual spirit."¹⁷ It was all speculative.

Dr. R. H. Charles adds that the continued personal immortality of the soul was—

"inconceivable from Anaxagoras' principle of an all-pervading mind. For though this mind individualized itself in certain material combinations, it retired into itself on the dissolution of these."¹⁸

Because of his theistic teachings, Anaxagoras was accused of atheism and impiety, as he claimed the sun to be a red-hot stone, not a divine being. And because of this and other teachings, such as his Persian Dualism, he was cast into prison and

¹⁵ Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-388.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 388. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁸ Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 150.

condemned to death. But he escaped and ended his days in exile. It should be noted that popular revolt was developing against the erratic speculations of philosophy, several philosophers having had to flee and some having suffered death.¹⁹

3. ATOMISTS: CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE DISAPPEARS AT DEATH.—At this juncture the Atomist School was founded in revolt against current philosophical contentions. It was established by LEUCIPPUS (fl. 500 B.C.) and his greater pupil DEMOCRITUS (460-355 B.C.). Experts agree that Leucippus gave the first clear statement of *philosophical materialism*. Contemporary mythical cosmogony was rejected in favor of a mechanical explanation. The Atomists held that matter itself contains all that is necessary for an understanding of the world structure. And the soul, they said, is no exception. It is corporeal, composed of fire and soul-atoms, the finest and most active of all, effecting the movement of living things.

Moreover, as they exist, these atoms are endowed with sensation only as they come together in certain relationships, as in the case of the human body. So the Atomists likewise maintained that consciousness disappears with the dissolution of the body, from which the soul-atoms were completely separated. And so separated, it is impossible that they should ever return to it.²⁰ The body is the vessel of the soul, which is the divine in things. But the "soul, distributed throughout the universe, is the Deity"—the "World-Soul and Reason."²¹

Starting with atoms and the void, the Atomists, with the physical bases of their system, held that "all things are composed of invisible, intangible, and individual particles or atoms, which by reason of variation in their configuration, combination, or position, give rise to the varieties of forms." But to the atom itself they imputed *self-existence* and *eternal duration*. That is how the *many* can arise from *one*.

And this general formative principle of nature they regarded

¹⁹ Draper, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

²⁰ Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, pp. 256-261.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 262-264.

as the law of destiny, or fate. Thus production of new things is only new aggregations. And contrariwise, the *decay* of the old is simply separations. And the soul is a finely constituted form fitted into a grosser bodily frame. Skeptical Atomists even went so far as to assert that the world is an illusive phantasm, and that there is no God.²⁹

Concerning man, they hold that breathing draws in fresh "soul stuff" from the air, supplying it to the body. Hence, when breathing ceases, death ensues, because of an insufficient supply of the animating atoms. Thus at death the unified soul ceases to exist. Rohde states their contention thus:

"The *continued existence of the soul after death*, an immortality in whatever manner the thing may be conceived, is here for the first time in the history of Greek thought, *expressly denied*."²⁹

That was fifth-century philosophical materialism as it pertained to the soul and immortality. It was a confusing picture.

4. SOPHISTS: BRING SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY TO A STANDSTILL.—In philosophy the conflict of unity against multiplicity was resolved by the atomist theory advanced by Empedocles and Anaxagoras on mind, or *nous*, and before that by Leucippus. However, philosophy turned from physics to ethics, and soon the Sophists (fifth century B.C.) became the teachers of Greece, and advocates of the subjectivity of standards.

As already noted, the starting point of Grecian philosophy was the physical. The earth was considered the center of all. So an explanation of the origin and destiny of the world and of man was undertaken. Intention and design were apparent. But the heliocentric concept of the planetary system was introduced, and the earth reduced to a subordinate position. And as we have seen, pantheistic notions of the nature of the world became pronounced, and the inevitable postulates of emanation, transmigration, and absorption were introduced. Then the idea that matter, motion, and time are phantoms of the imagination came to the fore—that atoms and space alone exist.

²⁹ Draper, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-126.

²⁹ Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 386. (Italics supplied.)

And now the Sophists, teachers of practical wisdom, appear—the outgrowth of peculiar conditions and the time—playing up the speculations of one school against those of another and representing them all as of little or no value. PROTAGORAS (fifth century B.C.) was one of the first. So it was that *speculative physical philosophy* was brought to a standstill, with no constructive alternative.²⁴ The fate of the soul came to the forefront of discussion. Rohde states Protagoras' position thus:

"Death, and whatever may reveal itself after death, is beyond the experience of any man. It may be that complete disappearance into nothingness follows death; that the dead man becomes simply nothing."²⁵

So it was that the Sophists, assailing the leading philosophical contentions of the day, personalized the growth of critical inquiry. Observing the conflicting philosophical schools and their contradictory conceptions, they adroitly and "sophistically" contended that there is no established truth, no real religion, no sure justice, no unassailable virtue—that the only object in life is rational physical and intellectual enjoyment. So the soul, some even held, is simply the aggregate of the different moments of thinking. Thus they ended in bleak skepticism, if not stark atheism. That was the crisis at this juncture.²⁶

Thus the Sophists of the fifth and fourth centuries were not so much a sect as a profession. They professed knowledge or skill as teachers. They differed so much in ability, character, and emphasis that Aristotle defined a Sophist as "a man who makes money by sham wisdom." Thus the word came to connote "sophistry." But Grotto denies this—they might be compared to Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau in the French Revolution.

The Sophists included leading teachers like Gorgias and Protagoras, made famous by Plato. But the foundation of their teaching was laid in skepticism. GORGIAS, for example, expressed his nihilism in three propositions: (1) Nothing exists; (2) if anything existed it could not be known; and (3) if anything

²⁴ Draper, *op. cit.*, pp. 141, 142.

²⁵ Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

²⁶ Draper, *op. cit.*, pp. 137, 138.

existed and were knowable, that knowledge could not be communicated to others. PROTAGORAS held that knowledge is so variable that all truth is but relative. Nothing exists at any time, but everything is always in a state of becoming. Even the existence of the gods is uncertain. So the leading Sophists sought to annihilate both existence and knowledge. In this they were opposed by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

5. SUCH A SURVEY JUSTIFIABLE AND ESSENTIAL.—A weird, conflicting, and oft-confusing panorama has thus unfolded before us. Proposition and counterproposition, action and reaction, advance and recession, swinging to and fro, like a vast surging tide in its inexorable advance. Crudities and puerilities that offend the senses have intermingled with majestic outreaches after better understandings. Even briefly to follow these developments would be profitless and wearisome were they not vitally connected with the great Platonic positions that eventuated therefrom, and which so mightily influenced the centuries that follow. That is the justification for their tracement here. The source and origin of many of Plato's concepts unmistakably stem from these earlier philosophers and poets we have just surveyed—and back to their spawning ground in Egypt and the Orient.

In the light of all this, it is therefore both justifiable and essential to get the import of this section of the search for immortality. Distasteful as this search may appear at first, as well as a bit wearisome and profitless, it is an unavoidable part of the indispensable background for our quest of the beginnings of the imposing Innate-Immortality-of-the-soul concept that well-nigh swept all before it, once it was syncretized and completed by Plato, and finally accepted by a compromising Christianity in the second and third centuries.

Plato will therefore be given special separate coverage. But first we pause for Aristotle, and the aftermath, before proceeding. We will shortly be in a position to recognize, understand, and evaluate Plato's syncretized positions, soon to be

discussed at some length, in relation to these antecedent concepts of the various philosophical schools.

6. UNPARALLELED IMPACT OF GRECIAN PHILOSOPHY.—This chapter closes with the reiterating of the fact that no nation of antiquity ever made so great an impact on the intellectual life of man as did Greece, situated on a small, rock-bound Mediterranean peninsula. Though relatively few in number, the Greeks left an indelible imprint on all subsequent philosophy, theology, medicine, art, poetry, literature, logic, drama, law, science, government, mathematics, and astronomy.

But it is primarily the philosophicoreligious angle that concerns our quest. The Greeks stressed the idea of man's unique worth, the summit of their philosophers' contention being the glory of man—his Innate Immortality and his transcendent destiny. Plato was admittedly the greatest philosopher of this gifted people. And one of his major concerns was the origin, nature, and destiny of man. To this he applied himself unremittingly.

But his was the pursuit of truth without benefit of divine guidance, without the protective counsel of inspired prophets, or the surety of an inerrant Guidebook. It was sheer, unaided human intellect, attempting by human wisdom alone to search out the truth on the nature and destiny of man. His concepts stand without a parallel in the permanence of their impress upon all subsequent generations. But they were in mortal conflict with the Word of God.

Plato—Pagan Fountainhead of Innate-Immortality Streams

When one approaches the study of Plato's postulates on the immortality of the soul, two background facts should be borne in mind: (1) Several Greek philosophers had preceded Plato in holding to Immortal-Soulism in varying forms and degrees—that his was a synthesis, as well as an advance; and (2) the concept of Innate Immortality was not the popular or general view current in Greece. Rather, it was the teaching of a small group, chiefly of philosophers, with Plato pre-eminent.

PLATO (427-347 B.C.), famous Greek philosopher of Athens, is generally recognized as one of the greatest thinkers of all antiquity. In sheer massive speculative thought and logical reasoning he is considered unsurpassed among all pagan philosophers. Of distinguished family and the highest training, he was first interested in poetry, then in statecraft. But when he became a pupil of Socrates the current of his life changed.

His close acquaintance with Socrates (until the latter's death) brought him under the spell of philosophic teaching, and turned him from poetry and public life to the pinnacle of philosophy. And he, in turn, became the teacher of the celebrated Aristotle. Thus the main development of Greek philosophy flows from Socrates through Plato and Aristotle. The sequence and overlap looks somewhat like this:

Socrates (470-399 B.C.)

PLATO (427-347 B.C.)

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

Plato stands without a peer among the men of genius in the



From Socrates the Main Development of Greek Philosophy Flowed On Through Plato and Aristotle.

philosophical world. He was the founder of the Older Academy at Athens, which continued without a break until dissolved eight centuries later, in A.D. 529, by Emperor Justinian. Indeed, the founding of the Academy was the turning point in Plato's career and a memorable event in Western European history. It was the first permanent institution for the prosecution of scientific learning by research, with pure mathematics as the core of the curriculum—the progenitor of the medieval university.

The tragic end of Socrates made a profound impression upon the youthful Plato. He felt a sense of destiny, driving him on to devote his life to the development of philosophy on an independent basis and to commit his teaching to writing for generations to come. In preparation he traveled for ten years, acquainting himself with the philosophies of his day. He studied in Egypt, Cyrene, Sicily, and greater Greece. His wide travels, his acquaintance with Socrates, his return to Athens, and his establishment of the Academy, were the preliminaries

of his remarkable career, with its amazing influence upon the thinkers of subsequent centuries.

I. Interest Centered in Origin, Nature, and Destiny of Soul

1. SUPREME ATTEMPTS TO INTERPRET RIDDLE OF LIFE.—

Like Socrates before him, Plato's interest concerning man centered in the origin, nature, and destiny of the soul. His own stream had its inspiration from the Socratic fountain. But he could not rest until he had developed those concepts, and had given them life, form, and direction. He felt that he must meet the prevailing skepticism and unravel the secrets of the grave—according, of course, to his pagan concepts.

And in Plato the soul's dignity, vitality, the independence of the body, the divine origin of all, propitiation, judgment, and moral reward for all surely reach their loftiest pagan expression. As a result the Platonic dialogues reveal the supreme attempt of sheer unaided human reason to interpret the riddle of life and immortality.

With Plato, however, philosophy took on a remoteness from practical concerns, and became absorbed in pure intellectualism, divorced from everyday life. In this he differed from Socrates, who was a man of the people. But Plato stood aloof from the world, "absorbed in transcendental dreams and abstractions," as someone has put it. He was an aristocrat, with disdain for the opinion of the masses. So he left the opportunities of public life that would inhibit freedom of thought and action.

2. IMPACT ON JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT.—

Though Plato was a pre-Christian pagan philosopher, beyond question no single man did so much to change the religious concept of the multitudes beyond his day, first in *Jewry*,¹ then in time

¹ Plato's impact on Jewish thought came through Philo's recasting of Plato's system into Neoplatonism, elaborated by Plotinus (d. 270 A.D.), and becoming anti-Christian under Porphyry (d. c. 305 A.D.).

in Christendom, first in *Catholic* circles, and finally in *Protestant* ranks. He was more eminent than either Socrates or Aristotle in creating and setting the immortality pattern of the future and in redirecting the current of human thought concerning the nature and destiny of the soul.

He was the inheritor of the old mythical concepts of Homer and Hesiod, and of the Orphic searchings into the mysteries of the universe, wherein men were considered emanations of the deity. And he drafted freely upon the metaphysical speculations of the lyric poets. But under Plato, theogony became theology, and speculation became dogma.

Plato's writings exerted a tremendous influence not only upon Aristotle, the Stoics, Cicero, and Plutarch, and as noted on Philo and the Neoplatonists, but especially on early Church Fathers like Origen. He also profoundly affected Augustine. As a consequence, throughout the Middle Ages, Platonic concepts achieved a permanent place in Latin Christianity.

The Renaissance led to a revival of interest in Plato. In the sixteenth century there was steady Platonic emphasis on religion in England, under John Colet, John Fisher, and Thomas More. And in the seventeenth century the Cambridge Platonists urged the return of theology to the Platonic philosophy platform as an antidote to "controversial aridities" of contemporary Calvinism and the secularism of Thomas Hobbs.

Strong Platonic influences were also present among various English theologians of the nineteenth century, such as Benjamin Jowett, F. D. Maurice, and Charles Kingsley. On the other hand, Protestant orthodoxy on the Continent, with its distrust of natural reason, was generally hostile to Platonism.

It should be added that Plato's twenty-four works range from 22 pages to 418, in their modern printed form. The bulk of his writings are in dialogue form, the Athenian mode of discussion, often setting forth Socrates as the principal spokesman, with various pupils or critics taking part in the discussion²—

² Scholars are unable to determine just how far the speeches represent the beliefs of Socrates and interlocutors, and how much they voice Plato's own beliefs. But that they do represent Plato's personal views is commonly understood.

the dialogue usually being named after a leading pupil. These we will examine.

3. BACKGROUND AND ESSENCE OF PLATO'S IMMORTAL-SOULISM.—Plato was definitely influenced by the Orphic Mysteries and Pythagorean and Zoroastrian concepts. These all met, and were fused into his complex doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the distinction of soul and body,³ and the identification of soul with mind. This placed his immortality thesis on a new footing.

The Platonic doctrine is first and last a doctrine of the *persistence* of the soul. According to Plato, immortality is a quality inherent in man, a consequence of his nature. All of Plato's logic and imagination were spent in proof of this one postulate—at whatever cost to other concepts. He sustained it by arguing the soul's desire and capacity for knowledge, its simple and invisible nature (then its threefold and complicated nature), its essential and invisible character, the power of reminiscence, the "circle of nature," and suchlike.

With this came the inevitable and inseparable dogma of transmigration—the existence of the soul in a particular body as a punishment for the sins of a previous incarnation. And the doom of its sins in the present body was its descent into other bodies and the postponement of its final deliverance. To Plato immortality and pre-existence were absolutely inseparable.

4. PRESENT LIFE ONE EPISODE IN ENDLESS SEQUENCE.—Since the soul is immortal, our present life is, he held, only one episode in its endless history. If this be so, the soul must long ago have learned everything, and needs only to be "put in mind" of something temporarily forgotten. This was his doctrine of recollection. Knowledge is recollection—remembering what the soul knew before birth. Thus:

"The soul, then, as being immortal, and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all; and it is no wonder

³ See Lewis Campbell, *Religion of Greek Literature*, pp. 350, 351.

that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she ever knew about virtue and about everything" (81c).⁴

Truth, Plato averred, is eternal. And since truth exists only as apprehended by the mind, therefore the mind, or soul, must be eternal. In *Meno*, Plato acknowledges the immortality thesis as springing from poetic myth. That is attested from the way it is introduced by the expression "poets and priests"—"which is the regular way of introducing a myth."⁵

5. THREE MAIN ARGUMENTS OF INDEFEASIBLE IMMORTALITY.—We may summarize Plato's three main arguments for the immortality of the soul as the postulates of:

a. Rebirth—Living souls come from the dead, and the dead from the living. The soul born into this world is one that has come back from the other world to which the soul goes at death. The body is simply the instrument that the soul uses while here—so there is a double journey.

b. Recollection—Knowledge of a former stage of existence is retained by the soul after the death of the body in this cyclical recurrence. The soul was fully intelligent before it was embodied. Therefore the soul is something divine, and in no danger of dissipation. Indefeasible immortality and indestructibility (as well as pre-existence) follow as a matter of course.

c. The "Idea" concept—The keynote of Platonic philosophy is this theory of "ideas," that reality belongs not to the individual material thing (a tree, a man, this book), but to the antecedent *idea* of the tree, man, or book. The tangible things are, he held, but fleeting and perishable, mere copies of the "form" or "idea," which abides in changeless unity forever. And to recover this is the sole object of knowledge.

But at best Plato's contentions were only a surmise, a hope, a conjecture that there must be something beyond the grave—at least for the souls of a noble few. Dr. R. H. Charles, also stresses the important fact that—

⁴ Benjamin Jowett, *Plato's Meno*, in Library of Liberal Arts, No. 12 (hereafter abbreviated to LLA), p. 37.

⁵ G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought*, p. 124, note 1.

"the immortality of the soul never became a part of the national [Greek] creed, but remained the peculiar property of individual theologians and philosophers."⁶

Generality of acceptance was to come to certain groups later. But it was not shared by many contemporaries. Now let us trace the unfolding story.

II. Complex Involvements of Plato's Immortality Postulates

The justification and the necessity for this extensive examination of Plato's views are, first, that only as we are acquainted with Plato's basic propositions will we be in a position to recognize the similarity of view and the heavy draft made upon Plato's thought and terminology, first by Philo the Jew and then by Origen the Christian—with gravely deviating effects upon both faiths. And, second, the principle that faulty premises inevitably lead to unsound and false conclusions will become increasingly apparent as we proceed.⁷

1. ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE COSMOS.—Plato explains the origin and nature of the cosmos as embracing the eternal "pattern," the "materials," and the "Demiurge," who brings about in the "receptacle the nearest likeness of the pattern which it is possible to produce." His *Timaeus* distinguishes between "'that which always is and has no becoming,'" and "'that which is always becoming but never is.'"⁸

2. CONFLICTING RECITALS OF CREATION OF MAN.—Professor Jowett, the Plato authority, brings out the fact that two widely conflicting tales of the creation of the universe and of man are projected by Plato (47c, 69a-90d).⁹ In the *Timaeus* the "Maker"

⁶ Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 156.

⁷ The purpose of this work is not to present a new critical translation of Plato's original Greek texts. Acceptable standard translations have been deliberately employed. Our objective is to analyze and present the recorded evidence, and to draw valid conclusions from recognized translations—thus to follow the continuing story unimpeded by technical minutiae. We are here tracing the larger over-all Platonic positions, so as to grasp their basic postulates, and their effects first upon Jewry and then on the Christian Church.

⁸ Glenn R. Morrow, Introduction to Jowett, *Plato's Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, p. 15.

⁹ Jowett, *Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, pp. 29, 30, 52-73.

first creates the universe, then delegates the creation of man and animals to an inferior order of gods, for the creator created many gods, of whom he is the "artificer and father." They receive from him the divine and immortal element—that is, the soul—and combine it in due proportion with the material and perishable. Thus man came into being.

But evil was born in him by reason of his composite nature. Everything good and evil, he holds, originates in the soul and spreads to the body. If man struggles against his passions and desires, he can make his pilgrimage unharmed. If he yields to temptations he (and not the Creator) is responsible for his evil state.¹⁰ That is one concept of the inception of evil that was projected.

On the other hand, in the *Statesman* (269 ff.), the riddle of the universe receives a different and contradictory solution. There was a time, the tale goes—a "Golden Age" in the distant past—when, according to a celebrated legend, the deity (or creator) presided over the revolutions of the world, and man lived in innocence. But, in the process of time, the divine pilot of the universe withdrew his hand from the controls, and the universe began to reverse its rotation, and the destruction of all creatures resulted.

Then, according to the myth, a new race succeeded. At first all was well. But gradually the evil inherent in matter reasserted itself, and the world was soon ready for chaos again. Then the deity again took control, restoring order to creation and making the world immortal and self-creating in the cosmic change. Men and animals now reproduced their own species, after their kinds, and civilization developed (*Laws* 677 ff.). Here is Plato's weird presentation in his own words, tied in with his transmigration premise:

"For when this whole order of things had come to its destined end, there must needs be universal change once more. For the earthborn race had by now become quite exhausted—each soul had run through

¹⁰ Cf. Plato, *The Republic* 617, in Loeb Classical Library (hereafter abbreviated to LCL), *Plato The Republic*, vol. 2, pp. 503-505.



Under Plato, One of the Greatest Thinkers of All Antiquity, Immortal-Soulism Reached Its Amazing Height.

its appointed number of births and had returned as seed to the earth as many times as had been ordained for it" (272 e).¹¹

So a mystical haze is cast, by Plato, over the origin of evil and the growth of civilization among men.¹²

3. EPITOME OF PLATO'S CONCEPT OF SOUL.—Jowett, in the master index to his two-volume translation of *The Dialogues*

¹¹ J. B. Skemp, *Plato's Statesman*, in LLA, No. 57, pp. 29-32.

¹² Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, pp. 484, 485. See also Martin Oswald, Introduction to Skemp, *Plato's Statesman*, in LLA, No. 57, pp. 24-27.

of *Plato*, ably summarizes Plato's teachings on the soul under several heads. This will provide an over-all view of Plato's curious concepts—with some unavoidable repetition:

a. The soul allegedly exists prior to the body (*Timaeus* 34 e)—the body to be its servant, heeding its commands, while the soul ever seeks to escape from the body in which it is “encaged,” or “entombed,” thus to go to its home with God.

b. In the *Laws* there are “two souls”—a good and an evil (*Laws* 896). Such a Dualism seeks to account for the existence of evil. (In *Timaeus*, Plato “explains the wickedness of man by the hypothesis” of this second, or “mortal soul” as the “work of the inferior gods, and in which passions and desires have their seat.”)

c. “The division of the soul into three elements, reason, spirit, appetite (or desires) . . . is made the means of classifying the different forms of government. Virtue is the harmony . . . of these elements, when the dictates of reason are enforced by passion against the appetites, while vice is the anarchy or discord of the soul when passion and appetite join in rebellion against reason.”

d. The pre-existence of the soul is presented in *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*. In *Meno* (86) and *Phaedo* (73), “‘remembrance of a previous existence’ is made a proof of immortality.” It is also alluded to in the myth of Er (*Republic* 621 a). (In *Phaedo* doubt is expressed by Simmias and Cebes that the soul is immortal. They fear that although the soul may outlive many bodies, it may be worn out in the end, and at last perish and decay.)

e. The immortality of the soul is discussed chiefly in the *Phaedo* and *The Republic*, but it is mentioned in various other writings. Notice is taken of the claim that the soul resembles a harmony, like the music of the lyre. But this is denied because the soul is declared to be a cause, not an effect. It leads the body, whereas harmony follows the instrument. And it allows for discord. Life, which is the essence of the soul, excludes death. Death cannot be predicated of the soul.

f. The condition of the soul after death is described in several dialogues under the form of myths. All attest that the soul, upon release from the body, goes to give account of itself before the judgment seat—the righteous being sent to the Isles of the Blest; the wicked to suffer punishment, not hopeless or eternal, but proportionate to their offenses. In *Phaedo* 113 e and *Gorgias* 525, a few great sinners, however, are consigned to Hades. “When the penalty has been paid, the soul must choose a new life,” with responsibility of choice resting upon itself. If it has learned wisdom it is given a better lot. But if it persists in folly, and chooses an inferior life, it assumes the form of a lower animal. But there is even a limit to the blessedness of the righteous—when the appointed time comes, they too must make new choices (*Phaedrus* 249; *Republic* 619 c).

g. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls was evidently adopted by Plato because it comported with the concept that he uniformly expresses of the remedial nature of punishment. This was evidently derived from Oriental sources but through Pythagorean channels.¹³

Such are Plato’s leading fancies concerning the soul.

4. TWOFOLD SOULS, FIXED NUMBER, AND TRANSMIGRATION.—Here is one of Plato’s amazing views: Holding to the Pythagorean doctrine of the eternity of the soul, he believed that the total number of souls is fixed, that it is impossible that there should be more than are allotted, so that “whatever the number of souls, all must have existed from eternity.” This was basic.

Another strange teaching was that the soul is twofold—that which is immortal being derived from the good supreme god, and that which is mortal being created by the inferior gods, and maintained by constant accretions. These are, respectively, the rational and animal souls. The former is essential being, and is intrinsically good. It is immortal and cannot be destroyed by moral evil. In this concept of the self-subsistence of the soul lay the germ of Restorationism.

¹³ Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, pp. 921-923.

Plato also held to the successive migration of souls through various human and brute forms. And he held the doctrine of eternal punishment for some, involving deadly Dualism. Moreover, the divine power was limited, and the allotted period determined by an allotted number. But the power of the gods was unable to bring all things to perfection, hence the strange doctrine of eternal vicissitude.

5. WEIRD AGGREGATION OF PLATONIC CONCEPTS.—Plato also had weird notions concerning the work of the Demiurge in the formation of souls. These included the number of souls equal to the stars, the place assigned to each soul in its own peculiar star, the relation of man's soul to the world soul, the tripartite nature of the soul, its placement in the body, its spectral form, prowling around tombs and reverting to the bodies of beasts, birds, and insects, such as asses, wolves, hawks, kites, bees, wasps, ants. These were all an integral part of Plato's reasoning, and the inseparable groundwork for his conclusions.

The Platonic theory of Innate Immortality therefore depends for its main support upon the postulate of the pre-existence of the soul, and is inextricably bound up with the assumption of metempsychosis.¹⁴

6. MYTHICAL TALE OF THE JUDGMENT INVOKED.—So sure is Plato of his belief in immortality that he employs his arguments chiefly to justify his beliefs. And there is no avoiding recognition of the fact that he supports his views as concerns the judgment by recourse to four myths,¹⁵ in his endeavor to bridge the chasm between the seen and the unseen world. And these myths have, in turn, had a very marked influence upon the later beliefs of others.

For example: Plato's *Republic* closes with the legend of Er, the son of Armenius, who allegedly saw in trance the judg-

¹⁴ See *Phaedo* 71-82; *Timaeus* 42, 92; *Phaedrus* 246-249; and *Meno* 81.

¹⁵ *Gorgias* 523-526; *Phaedo* 113, 114; *Phaedrus* 249-257; and *The Republic* 614-616.

ment of the dead and the hidden glories of the unseen world, and who returned without drinking of the "River of Forgetfulness."¹⁰ Thus he was able to recall what he saw, which experience was not vouchsafed to the others.

In noting this, we should ever remember that Plato maintains the postulate of the transmigration of souls and the long journey of souls (after judgment) for their rebirth as birds or animals. The tale is briefly this: Er died in battle. When the corpses were gathered ten days later, Er's body, unlike the rest, was not decayed. Two days later, while lying on the funeral pyre, Er recovered and recounted what he had seen in the other world.

According to the tale, when his soul left his body it journeyed with many others and came to a mysterious place where there were two openings into the earth, side by side, and two corresponding openings into the sky above. Between these openings sat judges. And according to the respective verdicts they ordered the souls of the *righteous* to go to the right, and ascend into the sky, and the souls of the *wicked* to go to the left, and downward into the earth. Er was told to report to mankind about this other world.

He declared that he saw souls come up for judgment and depart either by an opening into the sky or by one into the earth. But through the other two openings (into the sky and earth) Er saw souls arriving—all the *stained* from within the earth, and the *stainless* back from the sky. Those from the sky arrived as from a long journey, and departed to a meadow, where they greeted many friends, telling of indescribable beauty and pleasure in the sky. The others, with tears, told of their thousand-year journey and sufferings under the earth. For all their misdeeds they paid a tenfold penalty. The grossly wicked, the incurable sinners, had fearful punishment, and were cast into the terrors of Hell. Such were the penalties and punishments and the contrasting blessings portrayed.

¹⁰ Plato, *The Republic* 614-621, in LCL, *Plato The Republic*, vol. 2, pp. 491-521.

But that was not all. After a seven-day respite the groups in the meadow were obliged to proceed on their journey, choosing according to past incarnations, to become as birds, or beasts, or women—each drinking from the waters of forgetfulness, which blot out memory of the previous life. Then Er awoke. As a sequel, Socrates admonished that “the soul is immortal and capable of enduring all extremes of good and evil.” So live, he urges, that “both here and in that journey of a thousand years, whereof I have told you, we shall fare well.” Such a crass myth was part and parcel of Plato’s portrayal of the destiny of the soul.

7. DUALISM INVOLVED IN “TWO” ETERNAL SOULS.—The *Laws* is primarily political, but in Book x stress is laid on religious beliefs. This section embodies Plato’s exposition of natural theology—the cosmological argument based on the belief that all motion requires a “good soul” as its source. The existence of a second maleficent world-soul, identified with “necessity,” is also defended (x. 896).¹⁷ God is the good supreme soul, along with a second maleficent world-soul—which, of course, is unconcealed Dualism.

The *Laws* repeats and amplifies what is said elsewhere—that all that has life has soul (726).¹⁸ But in Book x there is this new emphasis—that the soul (the self-motion) is “prior to the body,” and is the cause of all motion (896).¹⁹ Moreover, soul is the *cause of all things good and bad, just and unjust*. It resides in everything that has movement—including the heavens. It “directs” all things through “will.” The soul “directs all things in heaven, and earth, and the sea and her movements” (897). This is elaborated on. Evil is included, as well as good. Furthermore, *there are declared to be at least “two souls”—“one the author of good, and the other of evil”* (896).²⁰ Such is Plato’s Dualism.

This Dualism consequently involves two warring souls

¹⁷ Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, p. 638.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 495.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 638.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

in Heaven. The good soul, or souls, gifted with wisdom, are responsible for the motions of the sun, moon, and stars, and are rightly called gods (899). The bad souls are the souls of ignorant men. Ignorance (absence of knowledge) causes some souls to misdirect their powers. This is to be cured by teaching and education. But the soul is the highest and noblest part of man. And the world is governed by the better of the two souls (897, 898).²¹ The implications, however, are far reaching. Such is another of the strange vagaries soberly put forth by Plato as part of his immortal-soul thesis.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 639, 640. See also Grube, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

Pagan Philosophy's Basic Arguments for Immortal-Soulism

The *Phaedo*—Peak of Plato's Teaching on the Soul

Many able scholars believe that the *earliest* group of Plato's dialogues includes the *Phaedo*, the *Gorgias*, and the *Symposium*; that in the second, or *middle*, period are found *The Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Theaetetus*; while in the third and *last period* are clustered the *Timaeus*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws*—the latter recognized as Plato's last.¹ By dealing in depths with the *Phaedo*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Timaeus*, we therefore touch on all three major periods in Plato's views and writings. But, before beginning the survey, this general statement from a specialist should be noted.

1. IMMORTAL-SOULISM NOT ORIGINALLY HELD BY PLATO.—According to Oxford's Dr. R. H. Charles, Innate Immortality was *not originally a part of Plato's thinking*. Here is Charles's statement:

"The immortality of the soul was not originally a part of Plato's system. We have in the *Republic* the various stages through which his views passed before he arrived at his maturest convictions."²

And with that point is to be placed the commonly recognized fact that the deathlessness of the soul, in endless happiness or misery, was not the general belief of the Greeks. Fur-

¹ This listing is based on stylometry, developed by Lewis Campbell. See also Grube, *op. cit.*, pp. xi, xii.

² Charles, *The Doctrine of the Future Life*, p. 152. (He cites Krohn, Pfeiderer, and Rohde.)

thermore, the *Phaedo* is a joint declaration of the views of both Socrates and Plato, or at least of Socrates through Plato's mind and hand.

2. **DISTINCTIVE ANGLES OF THREE DIALOGUES.**—As noted, with but few exceptions, Plato's writings are in the form of dialogues—often with Socrates as the principal speaker, in colloquy with certain critics or pupils. But it is generally recognized that the various speakers are really voicing Plato's own beliefs. Each of the three great dialogues here surveyed makes its own approach, as concerns the soul—the *Timaeus*, in the light of the soul's *divine origin*; the *Phaedrus*, as a principle of motion and a *prior existence*; and the *Phaedo*, unfolding the *grandeur of its after existence*, as well as gathering together the various reasonings and completing the arguments.

The divine and enduring soul, destined to eternal existence, is here contrasted with the mutable, perishing human body. The *Phaedo* far surpasses all previous attainments of pagan Greek thought on the origin, nature, and destiny of the soul. Let us first analyze the evidence of the *Phaedo*, most famous of all Plato's writings.³

3. **"THE SOUL IS THE MAN."**—The major discussion of the nature of the soul is restricted principally to the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus*, but it is also involved in *The Republic* and the *Laws*. And it is briefly touched upon in such smaller works as *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Theaetetus*, *Philebus*, *Statesman*, *Sophist*, *Symposium*, and *Alcibiades i*—thirteen in all. For instance, in *Alcibiades i* (130) there is discussion of man as "one of three things"—"soul, body, or both together forming the whole."⁴ The speaker rejects the concept that the combination

³ NOTE: In compassing Plato's witness on the soul, heavy draft has been made on Dr. G. M. A. Grube's *Plato's Thought* (1935), with its highly valuable Index. Under the **DIALOGUES** division, ten of Plato's separate works are listed—*Laws*, *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Philebus*, *Politicus*, *Republic*, *Sophist*, *Symposium*, *Timaeus*—the pages bearing on immortality being listed. Moreover, his masterful chapter four, on "The Nature of the Soul," deals with these in running commentary form. His keen and comprehensive conclusions have borne out the witness of my own independent search of the sources, and have been used as a check for my own findings. (See Grube, *op. cit.*, pages 316, 317.)

⁴ Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, p. 765.

of the first two constitutes the man, and flatly says that only "the soul is man."⁵

4. **SOCRATES WELCOMES DEATH AS "INITIATION" TO AFTER-LIFE.**—The *Phaedo* is a dramatic account of the last conversations and concerns of Socrates, one of the noblest of pagan teachers, during his last hours on earth. The scene, an Athenian prison; the time, the summer of 399 B.C. The day is spent discussing the origin, nature, and destiny of the human soul. This indicates the importance of the theme.

The immortality of the soul is here set forth with touching background and pathetic setting. It presents Socrates and his friends in the prison, the cheerfulness of the victim, the distress of his friends, the emotion of the jailer. Socrates, the philosopher, does not fear death—which he repeatedly declares to be the "separation of soul from body" in which it is encased—because he had repressed the lusts that had beset his embodied soul. He felt himself prepared in his pagan way. And now he welcomes death as "the final step in an initiation into true being." And this position was acknowledged to be in sharp contrast with the current belief of the masses that "the human soul is no more than the physical breath which death disperses."⁶

5. **DEATH DECLARED "FINAL STEP" INTO "TRUE BEING."**—Because of illness Plato was not present during this dialogue on that fateful day. Eleven were present. *Phaedo* (after whom he named it) gave a faithful report to Plato, then twenty-eight, who had been with Socrates for eight years. Under Plato's hand it becomes a story unmatched in the annals of ancient literature. In this colloquy on life and death Socrates, as a philosopher, with imperturbable calm welcomes death as the final step of entrance into "true being," holding that only after death does "the soul exist by herself, separate from the body" (67).⁷

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 766.

⁶ F. H. Anderson, Introduction to F. J. Church, *Plato's Phaedo*, in LLA No. 30, p. xiii. Dr. Anderson is professor of philosophy, University of Toronto.

⁷ Church, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

But, we repeat, the Socrates of the *Phaedo* expresses exactly the same concepts held by Plato, as attested by all his other writings. The voice is therefore that of Socrates-Plato, speaking in unison.

6. DEATH: "SEPARATION" OF SOUL FROM "BODY."—Socrates launches into his main contentions by asserting:

"I am as sure as I can be in such matters that I am going to live with gods who are very good masters. And therefore I am not so much grieved at death; I am confident that the dead have some kind of existence, and, as has been said of old, an existence that is far better for the good than for the wicked" (63).⁸

This concept, then, was not original with Socrates.

Declaring that he was of "good cheer," and hoping to gain the "greatest good" in the "other world" (64), Socrates asks, "Do we believe death to be anything?" (64). Then he expressly defines death as the "separation of the soul from the body," and asks:

"Does not death mean that the body comes to exist by itself, separated from the soul, and that the soul exists by herself, separated from the body? What is death but that?" (64).⁹

That is the initial premise in the Socrates-Plato reasoning.

He declares that "as long as we have this body, and an evil of that sort is mingled with our souls, we shall never fully gain what we desire." It is asserted that we live "in slavery to the cares of the body."¹⁰ Only "after we are dead" can we "gain the wisdom which we desire" (66).¹¹ And why? "For then, and not till then, will the soul exist by herself, separate from the body" (67).¹²

Six times in the four pages of sections 64 to 67 this thought and the term "separation" of soul and body occur.

7. POPULAR VIEW: SOUL PERISHES AT DEATH.—One of Socrates' companions, Cebes, often speaking in opposition to Socrates, voices the popular Greek skepticism:

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*

"But men are very incredulous of what you have said of the soul. They fear that she will no longer exist anywhere when she has left the body, but that she will be destroyed and perish on the very day of death. They think that the moment that she is released and leaves the body, she will be dissolved and vanish away like breath or smoke, and thenceforward cease to exist at all" (70).¹³

It is to be noted that *destroy* and *perish*, *dissolve* and *vanish*, are here used as denoting complete cessation of existence.

8. LIVING ARE BORN "ONLY FROM THE DEAD."—Socrates-Plato—for this was their joint teaching—insist that through death men are "born," or "born again," into the "next world." This thought is repeated three times in the one paragraph. A variant form, "generated from the dead," likewise appears more than once in close proximity (71, 72).¹⁴ Here is a precise statement, based on an "ancient belief":

"Let us consider whether or not the souls of men exist in the next world after death, thus. *There is an ancient belief, which we remember*, that on leaving this world they exist there, and that they return hither and are born again from the dead. But if it be true that the living are born from the dead, our souls must exist in the other world; otherwise they could not be born again. It will be a sufficient proof that this is so if we can really prove that the living are born only from the dead" (xv. 70).¹⁵

9. SOUL DECLARED "IMMORTAL," "INDESTRUCTIBLE," "INDISSOLUBLE."—And now in *Phaedo* 73 the key phrase "soul immortal" first appears. This one term "immortal," is mentioned about nineteen times in this seventy-four-page treatise. And, in addition, several variants are added—"imperishable," "indestructible," "unchanging," "unchangeable," "indissoluble," and "divine." There is no escaping Plato's intent.

10. POSTULATE OF SOUL'S PRE-EXISTENCE INVOLVED.—Cebes points out the logical and inevitable conclusion to this immortality argument in these words:

"If the doctrine which you are fond of stating, that our learning is

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16. (*Italics supplied.*)

only a process of recollection, be true, then I suppose we must have learned at some former time what we recollect now. And that would be impossible unless our souls had existed somewhere before they came into human form. So that is another reason for believing the soul immortal" (73).¹⁶

Recollection of former existences is thus an added argument that is used.

11. SOULS MUST HAVE EXISTED BEFORE BIRTH.—Socrates argued that knowledge is reminiscence by the soul of former modes of existence in other bodies—"knowledge before our birth" (76).¹⁷ The companions of Socrates logically raised the question as to whether the soul's *pre*-existence is really proof of its "survival in perpetuity."¹⁸ Socrates insists that—

"our souls must have existed before ever we were born. But if they do not exist, then our reasoning will have been thrown away. Is it so? If these ideas exist, does it not at once follow that our souls must have existed before we were born, and if they do not exist, then neither did our souls?" (76).¹⁹

But these "ideas" bear, of course, on *prior* existence, rather than *after* existence.

It is to be observed that this expression, "existed before ever we were born," appears five times in *Phaedo* 76-77,²⁰ together with the expression "all life is generated from death" (77).²¹ Simmias states that Cebes is "perfectly convinced that our souls existed before we were born" (77).²² But he adds that he himself does "not think"—

"that you have proved that the soul will continue to exist when we are dead. The common fear which Cebes spoke of, that she may be scattered to the winds at death, and that death may be the end of her existence, still stands in the way. Assuming that the soul is generated and comes together from some other elements, and exists before she ever enters the human body, why should she not come to an end and be destroyed, after she has entered into the body, when she is released from it?" (77).²³

It "must also be shown," he adds, "that our souls will continue to exist after we are dead . . . if the proof is to be com-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Cf. xxxvii. 88, p. 39.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

plete." But Socrates insists that "that has been shown" (77).²⁴

Socrates chides them for being "afraid that the wind will really blow the soul away and disperse her when she leaves the body" (77).²⁵ He declares that the soul is not "compound and composite," and that what is "*uncompounded*" is not liable to "dissolution" (78).²⁶ To him that argument was final.

12. "SOUL" INVISIBLE, UNCHANGEABLE; "BODY" VISIBLE, CHANGING.—Two kinds of existence, "visible" and "invisible," are next set forth by Socrates-Plato. The "invisible" is "unchangeable" and "unchanging," and the "visible is always changing." The "body" is definitively the "visible," whereas the "soul" is the "invisible" (79).²⁷ But "the soul employs the body," making use of its sight, hearing, and other senses. So, the *Phaedo* concludes, the soul "goes away to the pure, and eternal, and immortal, and unchangeable, to which she is kin" (79).²⁸ On the contrary, the body is "changeable." Then comes the declaration, "The soul is like the divine, and the body is like the mortal" (80).²⁹ The two are in complete antithesis.

And now comes the summarizing declaration:

"The soul is most like the divine, and the immortal, and the intelligible, and the uniform, and the indissoluble, and the unchangeable; while the body is most like the human, and the mortal, and the unintelligible, and the multiform, and the dissoluble, and the changeable" (80).³⁰

Words could not be more explicit.

13. SOULS "IMPRISONED" IN SUCCESSION OF ANIMAL BODIES.—The argument is next presented that "after a man is dead, the visible part of him"—the "body," or "corpse"—is subject, in due time, to "dissolution and decomposition." But the pure soul, which is "invisible," goes to Hades (the "unseen world"), "to dwell with the good and wise God" (80).³¹ No "taint of the body" adheres, but the soul goes away to the invisible, divine, and immortal (81).³² On the contrary, the

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

soul that is "defiled and impure," on its departure is "dragged back to the visible world," and here "haunts" the "graves and tombs" (81).³³ Socrates describes them as "imprisoned" souls:

"These are not the souls of the good, but of the evil, which are compelled to wander in such places as a punishment for the wicked lives that they have lived; and their wanderings continue until, from the desire for the corporeal [a body] that clings to them, they are again imprisoned in a body.

"And, he continued, they are imprisoned, probably, in the bodies of animals with habits similar to the habits which were theirs in their lifetime" (81).³⁴

This reincarnation in the bodies of animals includes "asses and suchlike animals"—if one has been gluttonous, or perchance, if one has been tyrannous, in "the bodies of wolves, and hawks, and kites." "In short, . . . each enters an animal with habits like its own" (82).³⁵

This thought of the soul's being "imprisoned" in a body, and bound in her "prison house, the body," is repeated several times.³⁶ Reference is also made to the soul's being "bound" and "fastened," and the condition is called a "captivity," from which the soul must be "released" (82; 83).³⁷ A soul is "defiled with the body when she leaves it, and cannot be pure when she reaches the other world; and so she soon falls back into another body and takes root in it, like seed that is sown" (83).³⁸ But the "philosopher or lover of knowledge" goes to the "race of the gods."³⁹ Philosophy "strives to release" the soul "from her captivity" (83).⁴⁰ So death is a special boon to the thinker. These and other features constitute the Socrates-Plato Immortal-Soulism in all its baldness.

14. SOUL "WEARS OUT" SUCCESSION OF "MANY BODIES."
—The *Phaedo* contends that the soul passes through a succession of bodies. In fact, it is declared that "each soul wears out many bodies" (87). The soul is "wholly indestructible and

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 33.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 34.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

immortal," not dying when the body dies.⁴¹ Then Socrates repeats the questions raised by Simmias and Cebes:

"Simmias, I think, has fears and misgivings that the soul, being of the nature of a harmony, may perish before the body, though she is more divine and nobler than the body. Cebes, if I am not mistaken, conceded that the soul is more enduring than the body; but he said that no one could tell whether the soul, after wearing out many bodies many times, did not herself perish on leaving her last body, and whether death be not precisely this—the destruction of the soul; for the destruction of the body is unceasing" (91).⁴²

15. SOUL AS INSTRUMENTAL "HARMONY" ARGUMENT DISMISSED.—Simmias presents the harmony counter-theory of the soul—that the soul is as beautiful music from a musical instrument, but perishes with the destruction of the "mortal" body, or "corporeal" instrument. The soul therefore is a resultant "mixture and harmony of the elements by which our body is . . . held together. It may perish before the body" (86).⁴³ Socrates argued that "our souls must necessarily have existed somewhere else, before they were imprisoned in our bodies" (92).⁴⁴ Here is Cebes' summarizing argument:

"Our souls existed in the period before we were born, but also that there is no reason why some of them should not continue to exist in the future, and often come into being, and die again, after we are dead; for the soul is strong enough by nature to endure coming into being many times. He might grant that, without conceding that she suffers no harm in all these births, or that she is not at last wholly destroyed at one of the deaths; and he might say that no man knows when this death and dissolution of the body which brings destruction to the soul, will be, for it is impossible for any man to find out that. But if this is true, a man's confidence about death must be an irrational confidence, unless he can prove that the soul is wholly indestructible and immortal. Otherwise everyone who is dying must fear that his soul will perish utterly this time in her separation from the body" (88).⁴⁵

The pre-existence and transmigration and reincorporation of souls is thus the bedrock foundation upon which the whole superstructure of the Platonic immortality of the soul is built.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 37.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

This argument quashed the harmony contention with Socrates' companions. The harmony obviously could not exist before the instrument (92).⁴⁶

16. SOUL'S IMMORTALITY CONNOTES INDESTRUCTIBILITY.—Socrates' (and Plato's) closing argument is this: Since "the soul is immortal" (106), it is therefore "imperishable."⁴⁷ This brought the candid admission from Cebes: "Beyond all question the soul is immortal and imperishable, and our souls will indeed exist in the other world" (107).⁴⁸

Then comes the admonition, but based on an "if":

"If it be true that the soul is immortal, we have to take care of her, not merely on account of the time which we call life, but also on account of all time [futurity]. Now we can see how terrible is the danger of neglect. For if death had been a release from all things, it would have been a godsend to the wicked; for when they died they would have been released with their souls from the body and from their own wickedness. But now we have found that the soul is immortal, and so her only refuge and salvation from evil is to become as perfect and wise as possible. For she takes nothing with her to the other world but her education and culture; and these, it is said, are of the greatest service or of the greatest injury to the dead man at the very beginning of his journey thither" (107).⁴⁹

17. FANCIED FATE OF INCORRIGIBLY WICKED.—Not only does the *Phaedo* assert a future life, it avows a retributive order of that life. It declares a judgment after death for all souls, according to the deeds done in the body—with a Heaven for the pure and a Hell for the vile, and a gradation of rewards and punishments. And it affirms a correspondence between sin and reality. After describing the earth and the dwelling place of the gods, Socrates touches upon Tartarus, with its never-failing, turbid underground rivers of water and fire and surging "liquid mud," like a "lava stream," and of earth's great "chasms," one of which is Tartarus (111-114).⁵⁰ As authority he quotes Homer and other poets.⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-69.

⁵¹ The part that pagan myths played in Plato's presentations is also seen in the *Gorgias* description of the judgment and retribution in *Tartarus*, which is confessedly based on a myth,



L. DAVID, ARTIST

BETTMANN ARCHIVE

Socrates, Propounding the Soul's Immortality, Was Condemned to Death and Compelled to Drink the Poisoned Hemlock.

Four rivers are described—Oceanus, Acheron, Pyriphlegethon, and Cocytus—all falling into Tartarus (112, 113). When the dead come, “sentence is first passed on them according as their lives.” Some are punished for their crimes, and “purified and absolved,” and rewarded according to their “deserts.” The incurably wicked are “hurled down to Tartarus” as their fate—eternal imprisonment—“whence they never come forth again.” Those that are not irremedial are likewise cast into Tartarus for a limited time. After a year, if they repent, they are cast forth, and their sufferings cease. Otherwise sentence to Tartarus is passed (113, 114).⁵²

But the righteous “are set free and released from this world, as from a prison.” These thenceforth dwell in a “pure habitation” on the “earth’s surface.” But those who have “purified themselves with philosophy,” thenceforth, “without bodies,” proceed to indescribably fair dwellings. And Socrates adds, “Noble is the prize, and great the hope.” Socrates-Plato, it must be added, did not claim that the soul’s future would be

but which Plato nevertheless regarded as a “true story,” and as “strict truth” (523) (*Plato’s Gorgias*, in LLA, No. 20, p. 102).

⁵² Church, *Plato’s Phaedo*, in LLA, No. 30, p. 69.

exactly as here pictured, but rather that *if* the soul is immortal, something of the kind must be before it (114).⁵³

18. DRINKS THE HEMLOCK AND FACES "JOURNEY."—Then comes the dramatic moment, when Socrates must drink the hemlock, and await his "journey to the other world." He indulges in a pleasantry when he replies to Crito's question, "How shall we bury you?" He answers, "He thinks that I am the body which he will presently see as a corpse, and he asks how he is to bury me. . . . Say that you are burying my body; and you may bury it as you please" (115, 116).⁵⁴

After bathing himself and sending away his family, Socrates calls for the cup of poison, and says, "But I suppose that I may, and must, pray to the gods that my journey hence may be prosperous" (117).⁵⁵ Then calmly, without change of color or feature, he drains the cup. His legs become heavy, under the effects of the hemlock, and he lies down, as the coldness and stiffness of death spread over his body. His eyes and lips are closed. The end has come.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70. See also *Republic* 614 ff. for more detailed account of the rewards and punishments of the next world.

⁵⁴ Church, *Plato's Phaedo*, p. 71.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Immortal Human Souls Part of World-Soul

I. *Phaedrus*—Mythical Flights of Composite Winged Souls

Plato's *Phaedrus*, another late work, has a section bringing out further points on the alleged *nature* of the soul (245)¹ that bear directly on Innate Immortality. Part of this discussion parallels the argument appearing in *Laws* 893-896.² But in *Phaedrus* the soul is set forth as a mystical composite, having higher and lower elements, whereas in the *Phaedo* it appears as one and indivisible.

1. CRUCIAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN "PARTS" OF SOUL.—As intimated, there are allegedly three parts of the same soul (253).³ The conflict portrayed here is *within the soul*, rather than between soul and body, as in the *Phaedo*. And in the *Gorgias* there is consistent reference to "that *part* of the soul where the desires are located, the unprincipled part" (493).⁴ In *Phaedrus*, in the good life the passions are obedient to the intellect, which is the charioteer, controlling the life and producing a state of harmony (253).⁵ Thus there are variations and discrepancies between the different dialogues.

2. TRIPARTITE DIVISION OF SOUL BUILT ON "MYTH."—Here in the *Phaedrus*, Plato soberly presents the astonishing

¹ W. C. Helmbold and W. G. Rabinowitz, *Plato's Phaedrus*, in LLA, No. 40, p. 27.

² Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, pp. 634-638.

³ Helmbold and Rabinowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁴ W. C. Helmbold, *Plato's Gorgias*, in LLA, No. 20, p. 63.

⁵ Helmbold and Rabinowitz, *loc. cit.*

myth of the three-part form of the immortal soul, covering not only human beings but the gods, as well. We must now follow the amazing reasoning that leads to his conclusions. The poetical figure of a tripart composite of the soul is unabashedly presented, in the likening of the soul to a winged group in the form of a pair of horses (one, white and good; the other, black and evil), with "intellect" as the charioteer—but all three forming a unit (246-248).⁶ Because of the contrariness of one of the horses the driving is difficult, and grave difficulties develop.

On the contrary, in the case of the gods, *both* steeds and driver are "entirely noble." However, with man they are *mixed*—the charioteer having difficulty with his steeds (246).⁷ W. C. Helmbold, of the University of California, summarizes in his Introduction the outcome of the clash between the plunging horses. It is the story of descent from the heavens to the earth in this curious way:

"The soul loses feathers from its wings; it drops to earth and takes a home, that is, a body which is governed by the composite soul."⁸

Such is the fantastic tale, with its poetic imagery, invoked to enforce Plato's argument.

3. "FAULT" IN "WINGS" AND "BLACK STEED."—Dr. Helmbold outlines the cause—a fault in the wings. So the soul, "intended to soar through the heavens," drops instead to earth. But fault also attaches to the unruly black steed. As a result of the plunging of the black horse, and the consequent crush and confusion, the soul becomes "lame, or breaks its wings," and is deprived of recapturing on earth the "beatific vision" glimpsed *before birth*. Thus the soul is tied in inseparably with the concept of reincarnation. Strangely enough, only the soul of the philosopher retains its wings, because he has "communion through memory with those ideas, the communion with which causes a god to be divine."⁹ Happiness depends

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. x; see also p. 42.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. x.

upon self-control. If this is complete, "their beatitude is assured for eternity."¹⁰

4. SOUL NOT "DERIVED," HENCE NOT "DESTRUCTIBLE."—In "Socrates Second Speech," Plato has Socrates say that "we must discover the truth about the nature of the soul, both the divine and the human." And he offers as proof the contention that "every soul is immortal, for that which moves itself is immortal"—that is, motion that is not derived from something else, and hence never ceases.

He explains that "a first principle" "cannot be *derived* from anything at all," for, if "derived from something else, it would lose its nature" in the "process of derivation." Then he adds, as a consequence, "And since it [the soul] does not come into being, it must also be *imperishable*. . . . *It is capable neither of destruction nor derivation* (245).¹¹ It cannot "come into being" or go out of being. That is the *Phaedrus*' contention and the gist of its argument as to immortality.

5. "TWO SOULS": ONE "GOOD," ONE "EVIL."—But it is not that simple. As Plato states in *Laws* (896): "Soul" is "the motion which can move itself." It is the "first origin and moving power of all that is, or has become, or will be." Thus "the *soul is prior* to the body"; "the *body is second* and comes afterwards, and is born to obey the soul." Now, to this, Plato adds, "The soul is the cause of good and evil, base and honorable, just and unjust, and of all other opposites, if we suppose her to be the cause of all things."

Since "the soul orders and inhabits all things that move," it therefore "orders also the heavens." Then comes the startling declaration that there are not less than two souls—"one the author of good, and the other of evil."¹² Thus we are again led back to stark Dualism, with all its fearsome implications, as noted elsewhere.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27. Note 9 gives alternate reading, "What is ever in motion is immortal."

¹² Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, p. 638.

6. "SELF-MOTION" IS "ESSENCE" OF SOUL.—Then, in the *Phaedrus*, a "definition of the soul" as "self-motion" follows in these explicit words:

"Since that which is moved by itself has been shown to be immortal, we shall not be disgraced if we declare that *this self-motion is the essence, the very definition of the soul*. For every body that is moved from without is soulless; and every body that derives its motion from within itself has a soul, since that is indeed the soul's nature. But if this is so, that what really moves itself is not the body and is nothing else but the soul, *then soul must necessarily be uncreated and immortal*" (245, 246).¹³

That is unequivocal—the soul is "uncreated." And the *Phaedrus* immediately concludes, "As for the soul's immortality, enough has been said" (246).¹⁴

Reverting to the soul's form, "expressed more briefly and in human language," Plato develops the famous winged-horses and charioteer-figure argument, with its poetic drapery—the group having grown into one:

"It is like the composite union of powers in a team of winged horses and their charioteer. Now all the gods' horses and charioteers are good and of good descent, but those of other beings are *mixed*. In the case of the human soul, first of all, it is a pair of horses that the charioteer dominates; one of them is noble and handsome and of good breeding, while the other is the very opposite, so that our charioteer necessarily has a difficult and troublesome task" (246).¹⁵

There are, therefore, the good souls of the gods and the mixed souls of human beings.

7. "IMMORTAL SOUL" PLUS "MORTAL BODY" EQUALS "LIVING BEING."—Next it is explained that a "living being is called both mortal *and* immortal"; that is, the soul is immortal, the body mortal. But the soul, which "traverses the entire heaven," is, oddly, "sometimes in one form, sometimes in another." When the soul is "perfect and fully winged it soars on high." But "if it loses its wings," it descends "until it can fasten on something solid." It takes on "an earthly body." So "this

¹³ Helmbold and Rabinowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 28. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

composite structure of soul and body joined together is called a *living being* and is further designated as mortal" (246).¹⁶

8. WING THEIR WAY WITH THE GODS.—The "natural function of a wing is to raise what is heavy, and soar with it" to the dwelling place of the gods (246).¹⁷ More than all else, the soul partakes of the divine nature. But with man there is strife between the good and the evil. The "horse of evil nature" pulls the chariot "heavily toward the earth"—if the "charioteer" has "not trained him well" (247).¹⁸ But when the immortal souls "come to the summit" they take their position in Heaven, with its entrancing vistas more wonderful than ever poet has envisioned. Such, he declares, is the truth. And such is the life of the gods (248) as they range through the universe, accompanied by the pure souls.¹⁹

9. VICISSITUDES OF DISEMBODED SOULS AND WINGS.—The myth describes the journey of the disembodied souls, in groups according to their characters, "lifted up by love of beauty—which causes their wings to grow." The gods, above the rim of Heaven, spend their time in contemplation of the actual "ideal Forms," and human souls follow on as best they can. Amid the crush and confusion they too occasionally catch a glimpse of the "eternal Forms," but "lose their wings and drop back to earth." Back here, through the love of beauty—which reminds them of the absolute beauty they saw above—the wings of the soul begin to grow again (254-256).²⁰ Thus the tale is repeated in varying form. But Plato urges:

"At the beginning of this story of ours we divided every soul into three parts, two of which had the form of horses, the third that of a charioteer. Let us retain this. As we said, one of the horses is good, the other is not" (253).²¹

10. TIME SCHEDULE OF PROGRESSIVE INCARNATIONS.—So the human soul "sometimes rises, sometimes sinks." The horses are

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-42; see also Grube, *Plato's Thought*, pp. 131, 132.

²¹ Helmbold and Rabinowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 38.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

unruly. And as other souls also seek the heights, they "jostle and trample on one another." As before noted, in the desperate struggle many are "lamed, and many have their wings broken through the incompetence of their charioteers." But according to the "Decree of Destiny" those souls that have caught sight of truth are "free from harm until the next revolution."

The soul, however, that is "unable to keep up," grows "heavy." "And in its heaviness molts its wings and falls to earth." But "such a soul shall not be planted in any beast in its first birth." Instead, it is "planted" in a *human* body—as in a poet, monarch, businessman, physician, priest, craftsman, farmer, sophist, et cetera.²²

And souls are born over and over. That principle is involved in the argument of the *Phaedrus*.

"The soul does not return to the place of its origin for 10,000 years"—for it takes that length of time for it to "regain its wings." And if a soul pursues wisdom for three incarnations "in succession," it "will become winged in the third period of 1000 years and so depart in the 3000th year" (248, 249).²³ Such are the wild vagaries of the *Phaedrus*. The basis of the time schedule is not disclosed.

11. SECOND INCARNATION AFTER THOUSAND YEARS.—But the tale continues. Some, having finished their "*first* life" are said to go to "receive judgment" in "places of chastisement," "beneath the earth." Others are "carried aloft by Justice to some part of the heavens." Then, after this thousand years, both groups "draw lots and choose their *second* [incarnated] life," each soul choosing "as it wishes."

A "human soul may enter the life of a beast." So some animals are degraded human souls. And conversely, a "beast who was once human may become a man again"—for, it is stated, "a soul which has never seen the truth cannot pass into

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 32.

this human form of ours." Furthermore, the soul remembers what it "once saw as it made its journey with a god," gazing upon "Reality itself." Plato then interestingly adds at this point, "It is right for only the philosopher's mind to have wings," for "he alone becomes truly perfected. He separates himself from the busy interests of men and approaches the divine" (249).²⁴

Such are some of the astonishing vicissitudes of the "human soul" as here soberly portrayed.

12. SOULS BECOME LIKE THE GODS THEY FOLLOW.—These periods of transition are times of agitation and despair as the human souls associate with various gods. Some are "not disfigured by this so-called body that we carry about with us, imprisoned in it like oysters in a shell." Others are beset by human passions, and have pain and distress, as the stump of the wings begins to sprout as support for the soul—like the gums of a child when "cutting teeth." But it is the "*first incarnation upon earth*" that is declared to be the crucial time. The souls of those who follow a good god come to "resemble that god." Those following evil gods become "exactly like their god" (252, 253).²⁵

Such were the "poetical figures," or legends, soberly used to portray the vicissitudes of the "immortal soul" in its varied migrations and transmigrations across the millenniums of time. It must now be apparent that to intelligently and logically accept Plato's conclusions on the immortality of the soul one must be willing to follow the actual premises from which those conclusions are drawn. And this inevitably necessitates a grasp of those premises, which have here been presented.

To reject Plato's erratic premises while accepting his conclusions is obviously an inconsistent procedure. That is why we have candidly examined the postulates upon which Plato based his deductions, lest the espousal of his conclusions lead us into unwitting embarrassment.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-37. (Italics supplied.)

II. *Timaeus*—"Human Soul" Diluted Part of "World-Soul"

It is obvious that we must be acquainted with precisely *what* Plato taught and *why* in order to understand and evaluate his arguments, and thus to determine the soundness and validity of his conclusions as later accepted by Philo, Origen, and others—even to this day. Let us therefore examine the heart of another of his key treatises, the important *Timaeus*, that likewise bears on the origin, nature, and destiny of man. First, as to the universe.

1. PLATO'S THEORY OF UNIVERSE AND MAN.—The *Timaeus*, discussing first the origin and nature of the far-flung universe, and then of man, was one of Plato's latest and most mature productions. It was composed when he was nearing seventy, shortly after 360 B.C.²⁶ Here the dialogue form gives way to continuous discourse. Dealing with cosmology (the theory of the universe) and natural science, he comes to the generation of the universe (denominated a living sphere composed of "soul" and "body"). Plato discusses the questions of "being" and "becoming" and ceaseless change. And while the reasoning is candidly based on myth, nevertheless, according to Dr. Glenn Morrow, it constitutes a statement of what Plato actually believed.²⁷

The *Timaeus* presents the visible world as a creation, based on a planned eternal pattern, brought about "by a cause working for the best," a creation produced by the activity of the mythical Demiurge ("artificer," or cosmic "craftsman"), bringing order out of "disorderly materials," as far as their nature permits, for human souls can do wrong of their own will. This teleological view of the universe was unique, setting aside the cosmogonies of previous philosophers and of popular cur-

²⁶ Glenn R. Morrow, Introduction to Jowett, *Plato's Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, p. vii. *Timaeus* has been regarded as one of Plato's most important works. It was, in fact, almost the only work of Plato known to Europe in the Middle Ages (Introduction, p. xxiii).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. x. Dr. Morrow is professor of philosophy, University of Pennsylvania.

rent mythology.²⁸ *Timaeus* thus begins with the "generation of the world" and leads on to the "creation of man."²⁹

According to the *Timaeus*, when the Creator formed the universe as a whole, and the stars therein, with their godlike natures, He commanded the created gods to produce mortal beings (41-43).³⁰ But He Himself prepared their *immortal* part in the same "cup" in which He had fashioned the world-soul—the only difference being that they were less pure.

2. "WORLD-SOUL" WITH STARS AS "DIVINE SOULS."—We should tarry long enough at this point to grasp Plato's concept of the world system, the shape of which he likened to a globe. According to Dr. Eduard Zeller, noted German historian of philosophy, and Protestant theologian and scientist, the earth was held by Plato to be an immovable round ball in the center, at the axis of the universe. The sun, moon, and planets circle the earth, the heaven of fixed stars forming the outermost circle, turning in one day around the axis of the universe. And these motions of the heavenly bodies give rise to time, each heavenly body having its own orbit.³¹ Then comes this significant summarizing statement by Zeller:

"Far from seeing, like Anaxagoras and Democritus, only dead masses in the heavenly bodies, Plato regards them as living beings, whose souls must be higher and diviner than human souls, in proportion as their bodies are brighter and fairer than ours."³²

Zeller adds that since the stars in their motion follow "pure mathematical laws"—

"if the soul is, generally, the moving principle, the most perfect soul must be where there is the most perfect motion; and if the motive power in the Soul is accompanied by the faculty of knowledge, the highest knowledge must belong to that soul which by a perfectly regular motion of body evinces the highest reason."³³

Thus the cosmos, circling about itself, is "absolutely uni-

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

²⁹ Jowett, *Plato's Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, p. 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22 ff.

³¹ Zeller, *Plato and the Older Academy*, pp. 379-384.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 384.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 384, 385.

form and harmonious," and "possesses the most divine and reasonable soul." Zeller then summarizes Plato's expanded statement: "The stars are therefore the noblest and most intelligent of all created natures; they are the created gods, as the universe is the one created God."³⁴

Such was Plato's deification of nature. The heavenly bodies were openly regarded as visible gods.

3. DUALISM: EVIL WILL NEVER CEASE TO BE.—Another distinctive principle that emerges in *Timaeus* is that of Dualism. Primary (or divine) and secondary (or auxiliary) causes in creation are set forth. The *Nous* (Mind) is persuaded of necessity to bring the "greater part of created things to perfection."³⁵ It will be well to bear in mind this important observation of Dr. Morrow before we proceed:

"Plato's God is not omnipotent, as is the God of Hebrew and Christian theology. The divine craftsman frequently finds himself hampered by the imperfection of his materials, and by a certain incorrigibility resident in them. His aim always is to realize the good, but we are reminded again and again that his achievement is limited by what is possible."³⁶

That is a fundamental limitation, and it involves another principle.

At this point frank and open Dualism appears in Plato. This is amplified in Plato's important *Theaetetus*, which holds a "central position in the structure of Plato's system of philosophy." Thus:

"Evils . . . can never pass away, for there must always remain something which is antagonistic to good. Having no place among the gods in heaven, of necessity they hover around the mortal nature and this earthly sphere. Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible; and to become like him is to become holy, just, and wise" (176).³⁷

In such matters it is to be borne in mind that "Plato bor-

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

³⁵ Morrow, *op. cit.*, p. xiii.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

³⁷ Jowett, *Plato's Theaetetus*, in LLA, No. 13, p. 41; cf. Introduction, p. vii.

rowed heavily from almost all of his predecessors, combining their insights to form a single unified theory of reality."³⁸ But "evil," Plato held, "is due, not to the will or design of the Creator, but to the character of the materials upon which he works," for God is "the author only of good."³⁹

4. "SOUL" IS SOURCE OF ALL MOTION.—With these three factors operative—the "eternal pattern," the "materials," and the "Demiurge"—Timaeus distinguishes between "that which," as he graphically puts it, "always is and has no becoming," and "that which is always becoming and never is."⁴⁰ "Soul" is the "source of motion"—motion being something "capable of moving itself," and this self-moving agency being "soul."⁴¹ So the Demiurge (or *Nous*) creates "soul"—first the "world-soul and then the soul of man."⁴² "Soul," "moving and living," was, he adds, the "created image of the eternal gods." "Soul" is therefore "a moving image of eternity" (37).⁴³

This was a new concept in philosophy, embodying far-reaching effects. Soul is the beginning, origin, and first principle of life. As previously noted, the world itself is allegedly a "living being," endowed with soul and mind—and that soul is spread throughout the universe.⁴⁴ That is the essence of Platonism on the soul. As Morrow says, he argues "that all motion eventually presupposes something that is capable of moving itself, and that this self-moving agency is soul."⁴⁵

5. "INTERMEDIATE" EXISTENCE BETWEEN "BEING" AND "BECOMING."—As Morrow further observes, "The elaborate description of the Creation of soul (34c-36e) is difficult to comprehend, and has been the theme of almost endless comment and controversy." He states that the "soul" is set forth as "so constituted as to have a kind of existence intermediate between Being and Becoming."⁴⁶ Further, "the world-soul is a

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. viii, ix.

³⁹ Morrow, *op. cit.*, p. xv.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Jowett, *Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, p. 19.

⁴⁴ See Grube, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁴⁵ Morrow, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

⁴⁶ Jowett, *Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, p. xvii.

mixture of the indivisible and divisible kinds of being," " whatever these terms imply. The three ingredients of being are defined as "essence," "sameness," and "otherness." ⁴⁸ And the account of creation is "the story of successive actions performed by the Demiurge." ⁴⁹ This brings Plato's primal principles before us.

6. IMMORTAL PART OF MAN FASHIONED BY PRIMAL CREATOR.—Plato then discusses a third entity, the "receptacle, or nurse of all generation." "Because of its formlessness . . . the receptacle cannot be apprehended by sense . . . ; it can only be affirmed as something that must be assumed if Becoming is to occur" (52 c). And this receptacle, he holds, is "as eternal as is the pattern." ⁵⁰ Then the account of creation "culminates in the creation of man (41b-47c, 69a-90d)." And the next emphasis is upon the "bodily vehicle," instead of the soul that uses it. "In the *Republic*, man's soul is composite, consisting of a divine part (the reason), and two 'mortal parts' (spirit and appetite)." ⁵¹ But in *Timaeus* Plato describes how—

"the immortal part, the reason, was made by the Demiurge himself, and from the same ingredients as were used in the making of the world-soul, *though much diluted*. To the 'created gods,' acting as his agents, the Demiurge entrusted the making of the mortal parts of man's soul and the body in which they are housed." ⁵²

And he adds, "Thus reason is the truly divine element in man." ⁵³

Here are Plato's words:

"Now of the divine, he himself was the creator, but the creation of the mortal he committed to his offspring. And they, imitating him, received from him the immortal principle of the soul; and around this they proceeded to fashion a mortal body, and made it to be the vehicle of the soul, and constructed within the body a soul of another nature which was mortal, subject to terrible and irresistible affections—first of all, pleasure, the greatest incitement to evil; then, pain, which deters from good; also rashness and fear, two foolish counselors, anger hard to

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. xvii, xviii.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. xxi. (*Italics supplied.*)

⁵³ *Ibid.* See also Grube, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

be appeased, and hope easily led astray—these they mingled with irrational sense and with all-daring love according to necessary laws, and so framed man" (69).⁵⁴

So, he holds, man's soul is immortal, unchangeable, imperishable, eternal, but his body is mortal.⁵⁵

7. SUCCESSIVE BIRTHS IN SCALE OF TRANSMIGRATORY DEGRADATION.—Still another singular point is stressed in *Timaeus*. After describing the "soul of the universe," Plato here again, as elsewhere, refers to human souls as "equal in number to the stars," adding that each soul is assigned to a star.⁵⁶ Plato declares that "according to the laws of destiny," the "first birth would be one and the same for all," so as to avoid discrimination. These souls were then to be "implanted in bodies." Then comes this stunning declaration:

"He who lived well during his appointed time was to return and dwell in his native star, and there he would have a blessed and congenial existence. But if he failed in attaining this, *at the second birth he would pass into a woman*, and if, when in that state of being, he did not desist from evil, he would continually be changed into some brute who resembled him in the evil nature which he had acquired, and would not cease from his toils and transformations until he followed the revolution of the same and the like within him, and overcame by the help of reason the turbulent and irrational mob of later accretions made up of fire and air and water and earth, and returned to the form of his first and better state" (42).⁵⁷

So it was that the "immortal soul" was fastened in, or to, a body that was in a state of "perpetual influx and efflux" (43).⁵⁸ Francis M. Cornford, former professor of philosophy at the University of Cambridge, summarizes Plato's concept in this way:

"After the journey in their star chariots, the immortal souls are next sown like seed in the planets and committed to the care of the created gods. Only the immortal element in the soul, as the immediate creation of the Demiurge, is indissoluble. The subordinate divinities must add

⁵⁴ Jowett, *Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, pp. 52, 53.

⁵⁵ Cf. Church, *Phaedo*, in LLA, No. 30, pp. 27, 28.

⁵⁶ Jowett, *Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, p. 24.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

the body and those mortal parts of the soul which temporary association with the body entails" (42 d-e).⁵⁹

8. ALL ANIMATED LIFE INCLUDED IN "LIVING BEINGS."—One further position is to be noted. "Soul," Plato taught, "spreads from the highest to the lowest of living beings." The variations and gradations are described thus:

"For everything that partakes of life may be truly called a living being, and the animal of which we are now speaking partakes of the third kind of soul . . . having no part in opinion or reason or mind, but only in feelings of pleasure and pain and the desires which accompany them" (77).⁶⁰

9. MAN'S "IMMORTAL SOUL" DECLARED HOUSED IN HEAD.—We conclude by observing that Plato locates the dwelling place of the immortal soul of man in its mortal habitation thus:

"God gave the sovereign part of the human soul to be the divinity of each one, being that part which, as we say, dwells at the top of the body [the head], and inasmuch as we are a plant not of an earthly but of a heavenly growth, raises us from earth to our kindred who are in heaven. And in this we say truly; for the divine power suspended the head and root of us from that place where the generation of the soul first began, and thus made the whole body upright" (90).⁶¹

And he adds, "Thus our original design of discoursing about the universe down to the creation of man is nearly completed" (90).⁶²

Such are some of the astonishing postulates, utterly foreign to modern thought, upon which Plato built his reasoning, and from which he drew his basic conclusion—the Innate Immortality of the human soul.

⁵⁹ F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, in LLA, No. 101, p. 146.

⁶⁰ Jowett, *Timaeus*, in LLA, No. 14, p. 60.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Skeptical Reactions Erupt Against Platonism

I. Aristotle Abandons Plato's Postulate of "Personal" Immortality

ARISTOTLE, of Stagira (384-322 B.C.), greatest of Plato's pupils—under whom he sat for twenty years—and for three years tutor of Alexander the Great, is regarded as one of the giant intellects of the ancient world. Döllinger significantly calls him, "Plato's most illustrious disciple, and at the same time his greatest opponent."¹

He was recognized as unsurpassed in logic and dialectics, and his philosophy was practical and matter of fact rather than mystical and speculative. He systematized formal reasoning and was considered the ultimate in his field, surpassing all before him in the natural science of his day. He was called "universal" doctor, for he compassed the whole circle of human science of his day and was the creator of logic, ethics, psychology, and natural history.

In 335 B.C. Aristotle founded his Peripatetic School in Athens. His students were called Peripatetics (walking philosophers), for it was his habit to deliver his lectures while walking. He rejected Plato's doctrine of "ideas," maintaining that ideas are not realities but merely mental abstractions. The idea exists *in* things, not apart from things. Aristotle held that God is an immaterial Spirit who is the First and Final Cause.

¹ Johann J. I. von Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, vol. 1, p. 333.

Such an assumption, he said, is inescapable from the evidences of design in nature.

He did not, however, recognize a divine *Personality*. God, he held, is pure energy, transcending the universe—the unmoved Mover of all things, without plurality and without parts. Moreover, Aristotle could not conceive of God as framing the world at any given time. The process, he thought, was an eternal one.

1. QUESTIONS PLATO'S REASONING ON IMMORTALITY.—With Aristotle the period of the great speculative system of philosophy is brought to a close. Following him philosophy takes a new turn, for he introduces the age of reason. Greece had gone through her period of credulity, her era of inquiry, and her time of speculation. And now, in marked contrast, Aristotle moves from the speculative scheme of Plato to the scientific method.

Aristotle's philosophical method was the reverse of that of Plato, whose starting point was the universal—the very existence of which was a matter of faith. Then, from the universal, he descended to particulars. On the contrary, Aristotle rose from particulars to universals, advancing by induction. His system was therefore called "inductive philosophy." Plato had trusted to imagination, Aristotle relied on reason.

Instead of Plato's fanciful reminiscences, or abstractions—from former experiences, as he thought, in other previously incarnated lives—Aristotle sought to substitute actual experiences in this life, recalling facts and collating them and discovering likenesses and differences. But, like others before him, Aristotle was still confused. For example, he held that matter has a triple form—simple substance, higher substance, and absolute substance, or God Himself; that the universe is immutable and eternal; and that the primitive force that gives rise to all motion and change is nature. He also held that the world is a living being, having a soul.² John Draper summa-

² Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. 1, pp. 177-181.



Aristotle, Plato's Greatest Pupil, Abandons Plato's Postulate of "Personal" Immortality.

rizes Aristotle's discussion of what he believes to be the functions of the human soul and body, with this simple statement: "It is doubtful whether Aristotle believed in the immortality of the soul, no decisive passage to that effect occurring in such of his works as are extant."³

That is borne out by my own investigation.

2. ARISTOTLE IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH PLATO.—Taking Platonism as his basis, Aristotle sensed its contradictions and its gaps, and struck out into new paths. In many aspects these two great thinkers of antiquity are in almost complete contrast. As Döllinger says, Plato was the philosopher of the intellect, Aristotle of nature.⁴ As to the relation of God to the world, Plato set Him forth as the Master-BUILDER, Aristotle as the last end or Final Cause. The world, he held, is from eternity, and the entire cosmos without beginning and therefore indestructible.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴ Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 333, 334.

But, as noted, Aristotle also rejected and combated Plato's doctrine of ideas and its consequences. He placed in nature the forms that appear to be embodied in her. They were not planted by God in nature but they constitute her real essence. Plato's God is intelligent power, ordering and sustaining the world, or cosmos. But to Aristotle the First Cause is an eternal, ever-energizing substance, corresponding to Plato's World-Soul rather than his creative Demiurge. To Aristotle there could be no plurality of gods.

3. SOUL IS THE "PRINCIPLE OF LIFE."—Aristotle is likewise far from Plato in his doctrine of the soul and its immortality. He challenges the twin concepts of pre-existence and metempsychosis. He rejects as absurd the notion that the soul could enter any body it liked. And he regarded Plato's theory of reminiscence as "frivolous" and "contradictory." To Aristotle the soul exists primarily "as quickening the body." It is the principle that gives form, motion, and development to the body—penetrating and energizing it as the *principle of life*.

The body is nothing of itself, except as a medium through which the soul is realized.⁵ It cannot be imagined without the body, or the body without it. And Aristotle divides the soul into three component parts—the nutritive, the sensitive, and the thinking power (*nous*). What God is to the universe, that the *nous* is to the soul.⁶

4. ONLY DIVINE REASON IS IMMORTAL.—The really human part that comes into being must also pass away. Only the divine reason is immortal. Here is Döllinger's comment on Aristotle's position:

"Only the divine reason is immortal; but, as the memory belongs to the sensitive soul, and individual thought depends on the understanding or passive *nous* only, all self-consciousness must cease with death."⁷

In other words, there is no conscious continuance. Never-

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 338, 339.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

theless, in one fragment preserved by Eudemus, Aristotle seems to support an immortal-soul concept.

"When mind is set free from its present conditions it appears as just what it is and nothing more: this alone is immortal and eternal (*we do not, however, remember its former activity* because, while mind in this sense is *impassible*, mind as passive is destructible), and without it *nothing thinks.*"⁸

Döllinger observes that he was here obviously speaking "exoterically" to Eudemus, not scientifically.⁹

5. SEPARATED SOUL HAS NO "INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE."—Erwin Rohde maintains that in Aristotle's discussion of the soul's nature and destiny "two voices are distinctly audible," first, the physicist, then the metaphysician. The living, organic, physical body brings the potential into existence. Independent life resides in the body. But the soul is "bodiless and immaterial," and is the cause, not the resultant, of the merging of the various functions of the body, which exists for the soul's benefit. "It dwells within a natural organism." It is not to be regarded as "separate from the body," any more than the vision is separate from the eye.¹⁰ Rohde explains Aristotle's position in this way:

"When the living creature dies the matter of which it was composed loses its special adaptation to a purposeful organism, and this adaptation was its life; without it there can be no independent Substance. . . . The Form, the functional power of the once-living organism, its 'soul,' has no longer any independent existence."¹¹

"There is nothing left that can be thought of as forming the content of the life and activity of the Mind in its separate existence after the completion of its period of life on earth. . . .

"The thought of immortality cast in this form could no longer possess any real value or ethical significance for man."¹²

In other words, there is a loss, or submergence, of personality or individuality in that continuance.

⁸ Aristotle, *De anima*, book 3, chap. 5, 23-25, in *The Works of Aristotle* (J. A. Smith tr.), vol. 1, in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 8, p. 662. (Italics supplied.)

⁹ Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 339.

¹⁰ Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 493.

¹¹ *Ibid.* In the documentation and notes Rohde cites scholars who affirm that Aristotle's words can only mean "the denial of immortality." See pages, 512, 513, note 34.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 496.

6. TRIPARTITE NATURE: BODY, SOUL, AND MIND.—Aristotle distinguishes between “mind” and “soul,” and separates man into *three* parts—body, soul, and mind. The “mind” is “that in us which thinks and conceives.”¹³ It enters into man at his creation, and is separate from the soul. In its relationship to the body and soul it is the ruling element over both.¹⁴ The mind is what the individual man *is*, and without mind man could not exist. When death occurs, the mind disappears into “impenetrable darkness.” “The separate existence of the mind,” “persisting for itself alone,” is therefore “beyond not merely our perception but our conceiving as well.”¹⁵

7. ROHDE SUMMARIZES ARISTOTLE’S POSITION.—Rohde brings out the fact that in his youth Aristotle had been a complete Platonist, indulging in phantasies about the “origin, nature, and destiny of the soul.” Later he repudiated the concept of the soul as inhabiting the body.¹⁶ The “soul” was the “realization of the life of this entirely distinct and physical organism.” Mind, according to Aristotle, is not to be included in the soul, but is “coupled with the soul from without and for its limited period of life.” It has no compulsive urge for deliverance. Aristotle thus distinguishes between *mind* and *soul*. He does not conceive of its “separate existence after the completion of its period of life on earth.”¹⁷

8. ZELLER ON PRE-EXISTENCE, INCARNATIONS, AND “PERSONAL IMMORTALITY.”—Eduard Zeller gives a similar analysis:

“In his earlier writings he [Aristotle] enunciated the Platonic doctrines of the pre-existence of the soul, its incarceration in the body, and its return at death to a higher existence. He therefore assumed the continued personality and self-conscious existence of the individual after death.”¹⁸

But, Zeller continues, as Aristotle developed his own system he was “necessarily led to question these assumptions.”

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 493.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 494, 495.

¹⁶ Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics*, vol. 2, p. 130.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 495.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 496; cf. p. 383.

Aristotle considered the human soul as the "*entelechy*"¹⁹ of the body, in whose service the whole body is enlisted. Here is the explanation:

"As he came to conceive of body and soul as essentially united, and to define the soul as the *entelechy* of the body, and as, further, he became convinced that every soul requires its own proper organ, and must remain wholly inoperative without it, he was necessarily led, not only to regard the pilgrimage of the soul in the other world as a *myth*, but also to question the doctrines of pre-existence and immortality as they were held by Plato. Inasmuch as the soul is dependent upon the body for its existence and activity, it must come into existence and perish with it."²⁰

Zeller adds that Aristotle expressly rejects the idea that the dead are "happy," but rather that death brings the loss of all senses. Hence—

"under these circumstances it is impossible to say that Aristotle taught a doctrine of personal immortality. He taught merely the continued existence of thinking spirit, denying to it all the attributes of personality."²¹

9. WESTCOTT AGREES WITH ZELLER, ROHDE, AND DRAPER.—Anglican Bishop B. F. Westcott²² states that Aristotle "examined with most elaborate care" the immortality question, and sums it up thus:

"Sternly and pitilessly he states the last conclusion of man's natural hope of immortality as tested by reason."²³

"The judgment of Aristotle sums up the final result of Greek Philosophy on the soul, as a subject of pure speculation. From his time philosophy became essentially practical."²⁴

10. OTHER SCHOLARS AGREE IN FOREGOING EVALUATIONS.—Emmanuel Petavel, in his classic *The Problem of Immortality*, concurs:

"Aristotle, for his part, scarcely mentions immortality;

¹⁹ *Entelechy*—a difficult Aristotelian term, meaning the perfected realization or complete actuality, as contrasted with mere potential existence, and realized in an organized being, such as an individual man.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131; cf. pp. 8-10; also p. 120.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²² BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT (1825-1901), Anglican bishop, Biblical scholar, and author, was professor of divinity at Cambridge University, canon of Westminster, and bishop of Durham. He was also one of the New Testament revisers.

²³ B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, p. 125.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

the little that he does say about it is very much like Conditionalism."²⁵

Dr. Stewart Salmond, professor of theology, Free Church College, Aberdeen, says significantly:

"Few have been satisfied by the Platonic doctrine. It made but scanty conquests either at the time or in later schools of Greek and Roman thought. It was not accepted even by Plato's own immediate disciples. It does not appear to have obtained any place with Aristotle, in whose writings the whole question of the immortality of the soul is ignored; or, if not ignored, it is left so . . . indeterminate by the great Stagirite [Aristotle] that Origen [*Contra Celsum*, iii. 75] classes him with Epicurus in this matter, and modern scholars, not a few, have concluded that he did not believe in the soul's after-life."²⁶

And the eminent Dr. Döllinger puts Aristotle's teaching in this terse way: "The really human in the soul, that which has come into being, must also pass away . . . ; only the divine reason is immortal."²⁷

The contrast with Plato's position is noteworthy.

11. CENTURIES-OLD CONFLICT OVER ARISTOTLE'S POSITION.

—Because of his conflicting statements, the question as to whether Aristotle taught or denied the immortality of the soul has been the subject of innumerable debates from his day until now. But his main repeated position is quite clear. And it is incontrovertible that his name has been cited by many of his ablest followers *in every generation* as authority for rejecting the doctrine of personal, Innate Immortality. That is why examples have been cited. The battle has raged over the literal *versus* the figurative, the esoteric and the popular.²⁸ But as Prof. Heinrich Ritter, formerly of the University of Göttingen, wisely says:

"The dispute cannot be settled by any passage in his extant works. . . . We must, therefore, draw our conclusion . . . from the general context of Aristotle's doctrine; and from this it is clear, that he had no

²⁵ Emmanuel Petavel, *The Problem of Immortality*, p. 51; cf. p. 279 ("Aristotle . . . hardly ever alluded to the subject").

²⁶ Salmond, *Christian Doctrine*, pp. 151, 152.

²⁷ Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 339; see also pp. 338-340.

²⁸ Alger, *History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 191.

conception of the immortality of any individual rational entity, although he did ascribe an eternal existence in God to the universal reason."²⁹

II. Widespread Opposition by Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics

The inability of Platonic philosophy as an ethical system to give that rest and assurance to the soul that it professed to provide, and the detached devotion of the Peripatetics to science and history, created a distrust of all existing systems and a skeptical questioning of all philosophical claims and certainties. This gave rise to three significant movements—the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Skeptics.

I. STOICISM: MATERIALISTIC PANTHEISM; ULTIMATE LOSS OF PERSONALITY.—The Stoic School was launched by ZENO of Citium (c. 355-c. 263 B.C.), contemporary of Aristotle, when the populace had grown weary of the endless bickerings between the conflicting schools of philosophy. Zeno's disciples, first called Zenonians, received their permanent name, Stoics, from Stoa, the "painted porch" where they first assembled for instruction. And Stoicism, it is to be noted, came to exert a profound influence in both pre-Christian and early Christian times, for it persisted aggressively for centuries. (See Tabular Chart A, page 532.)

Stoicism was basically a materialistic pantheism, and was the direct antithesis of Platonism. It not only proclaimed the freedom of the human will but professed to explain all life, as well. In it Fate played a major role. From eternity everything is "determined by an infinite chain of foregone causes."³⁰

The Stoics regarded "matter" (motionless, passive, unformed) and "force" (active, moving, molding) as the two ultimate principles, yet actually one, with God as the working force of the universe. And according to Ritter, they regarded the soul, which concerns us, as—

"an emanated portion of the universal fire, or universal reason, which

²⁹ Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 3, p. 256, note.

³⁰ Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 350.

encompasses the heaven, and rules All; and therefore it can only be preserved by the constantly accruing fire."²¹

2. PERIODIC REABSORPTIONS INTO DEITY.—The entire cosmos was regarded as conscious. And consciousness was considered as synonymous with Deity. God, they held, is the World-Soul, and the world an organized living being. The "soul" of the world was therefore everywhere present—which belief, of course, is simply pantheism. Furthermore, all things were, the Stoics believed, destined to be *periodically reabsorbed into the Deity*, with the process beginning all over again after each conflagration.²²

But the human soul, believed to be none other than the "warm breath" within us, was considered part of the World-Soul, or Deity. And though the soul survives the body, it is absorbed back into the World-Soul at the end of each cosmic period, where it is to be noted, *its individuality is lost*. That should ever be remembered. To the Stoic, therefore, immortality meant extension of life, but not an absolute personal or individual immortality.

The Stoics considered all substances—including the human soul and the Deity—as "bodies," something corporeal. Whatever was real was material. And specifically, the soul was regarded as warm vapor, or "fire," with the World-Soul having the same relationship to the universe as the human soul to the body. It was believed to permeate and interpenetrate the whole body. And this "fire" of the soul was believed to be nourished by the blood. And as to its ultimate, Zeller puts it in this form: "After death the souls were supposed to endure until the end of the world, when they returned with everything else to God."²³ That was the declared end.

3. THE SOUL A FRAGMENT OF THE DIVINE.—According to Stoicism, "the Universe is God. God is thus not only the matter but the form, the life and the power of the world."

²¹ Ritter, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 249, 250. See also Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 349.

²² Cf. Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 351.

²³ Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 227-248.

Deity was considered the original matter, the "fiery breath" of life that maintains and changes the world. Rohde states it this way: "The universal deity . . . is thus at once matter, mind, and formative principle." But "the soul of man, . . . endowed with reason, is a fragment of the divine, and is itself divine like everything else in the world"—only in a purer degree.

Lower matter "degenerates progressively as it gets farther and farther from the divine fire." The individual soul, though distinct from the body, dwells in the body. Yet it is not thereby completely detached from the universal life, and remains subject to "universal Law." It is an emanation, the Stoics insisted, from the "universal Reason." Nevertheless, the soul has self-determination, and is responsible for its own decisions and acts.³⁴

4. ETERNAL SOUL-ESSENCE LOSES PERSONAL INDIVIDUALITY.—It is to be observed that the Stoics held the concept of a single and absolute Being, refusing to recognize, in contrast to some, a paralleling, dualistic principle of evil. They did believe, however, that the individual is capable of violating the laws of the all-embracing Deity. Rohde calls attention to the important fact that pure pantheism cannot postulate a paralleling principle of evil, through the overthrow of which a lost unity of God is restored.³⁵

In common with others, they held that death is the separation of the soul from the body. This soul-essence does not, they taught, perish with the body. But God, the Soul of the world, is "eternally indestructible." Furthermore, no underworld was recognized by the Stoics. To them the extension of life was in the ethereal heavens. Thus we see that the Stoic doctrine of immortality never extended to *personal, individual immortality*.³⁶ And Stoicism, it should not be forgotten, projected its weighty influence for several centuries into the Christian Era.

³⁴ Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 497, 498.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 498, 499.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 500, 501.

5. HOPELESSNESS AND INADEQUACY OF STOICISM.—Summarizing: The soul of man is regarded as a portion and fragment of the divine principle of the universe. It has no independent existence of its own. But it is not destined to perish with the body. When the cycle of duration is accomplished, it is destined after death to reabsorption into the Source whence it came. Stoical philosophy held that whatever had a beginning must perforce have an end, and that there is but one real existence.

According to Zeller, the "one" remains, while the "many" change and pass. Deity, the active power of the universe, produces all things from himself. But, after a certain period, Deity draws them back into himself. Then he produces a new world in a new cycle—and so on forever, repeating endlessly.²⁷ That was the disillusioning essence and the stark hopelessness of Stoicism. It has been aptly said that its materialistic divinity, its unspiritual humanity, and its fatalistic universe separate it completely from all revealed religion, Jewish or Christian. Such was one of the reactionary, divisive forces now operative against Platonism.

III. Epicureanism—Gross Materialism and Cessation of Soul

1. DEATH BRINGS PERMANENT CESSATION OF LIFE.—At approximately the same time EPICURUS, of Athens (c. 342-270 B.C.), appeared, with his reactionary Epicureans. Imitating Aristotle's Peripatetics, Epicurus purchased a garden in the heart of Athens, and founded his school. (See Tabular Chart A, page 532.) He held that the senses provide the sole criteria of truth. And, significantly enough, among other things he frankly called for an *abandonment of belief in survival*. His was a form of skepticism and utter materialism. And it likewise flourished for several centuries, beginning before and continuing after Christ.

Epicurus reasserted the materialistic atoms-concept first

²⁷ Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, pp. 165-167.

projected by Democritus. (See page 553.) Epicureanism also had a definite Cyreniac tinge. Epicurus did not attempt to deny the popular concept of the gods, but asserted that they had nothing to do with the affairs of the universe or of man. And he specifically *denied any kind of immortality of the soul*—conditional or natural. Epicurus contended that matter is uncreated and indestructible, and that activity is resident in all matter from eternity.

He taught that the primitive elements of matter are indivisible particles, or atoms, which are eternal and imperishable. These pass through various combinations, and progressively assume new forms and properties. Thus the worlds, infinite in number and infinitely varied, came to be.

2. WORLD FORMATIONS RESULT OF BLIND CHANCE.—These atoms, he believed, are constantly forming new combinations and undergoing periodic dissolutions. But all this, he held, is *produced by chance*,³⁸ with no controlling intelligence. As noted, Epicurus regarded the universe as material, infinite in extent and eternal in duration. In fact, he recognized two kinds of existence—(1) that of bodies, and (2) that of void, space, or vacuum. But, we repeat for emphasis, he held that the world was produced by chance—³⁹ the chance coming together, with adherence of atoms of infinite number, size, and shape. And further, beyond our world there are innumerable others, similarly appearing by accident. His was indeed a “fortuitous concurrence” of atoms concept!

As to the soul, in all this, at the death of the body the soul-atoms are scattered, having no shelter and abode, and *the soul consequently ceases to exist*. This understanding, Epicurus held, frees one from the terrors of Hades. He argued that death is nothing to us, for one “only is when death is not; where *death* is, he is no longer there.”⁴⁰ Epicurus contended that the great evil that afflicts man is fear—fear of the gods, fear of death, fear of natural things, and fear of destiny. To

³⁸ See also Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 361.

³⁹ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 165-166.

⁴⁰ Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

eradicate these fears was the ultimate aim of his speculations."

3. PLEASURE CANONIZED WITHOUT RESTRAINT.—Life was therefore set forth as without divine sanction, without human responsibility, *without existence hereafter*, and with neither reward nor penalty for one's words or acts during life. There was no moral constraint, no domain of conscience, no real standards or ethics, no divine authority or superintendence—and, we reiterate, man was said to be *without a hereafter*. Such was the radical nature of the Epicurean reaction against Platonism.

In all this fanfare Epicurus disparaged "science" and the predominant philosophy, and depreciated logic. Rejecting all mythical contentions and conceptions, and denying the supernatural he canonized pleasure, advising men to accept life as it comes, and enjoy pleasure while they may. His philosophy was therefore the art of enjoying the *present* life as the supreme end of man's being, which he called the only "rational" attitude.

Epicurus felt no concern over death, or the power of the gods—holding they were only a "delusion." The soul, which he taught is merely an aggregation of atoms, is resolved at death into its constituents. One can, of course, understand Epicurus' revulsion against the crude mythical notions and puerilities of prior schools of philosophy. But his pendulum had swung to the opposite irrational extreme in denial.

4. SEPARATED SOUL UTTERLY CEASES.—As we have seen, to Epicurus there was no reality but bodily reality—corporeal substance. Thus the "body" of the soul consists of subtle particles—the finest, lightest atoms. And it dissolves instantaneously upon death. A soulless body, he argued, is no heavier than one in which there is a soul. So he insisted that when the "connection between soul and body is fully severed, then the soul can no longer exist"—its constituent atoms being "dispersed in a moment."⁴²

⁴¹ Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 362.

⁴² Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, pp. 452-456.

And Rohde states it thus: "The atomist doctrine renewed by Epicurus demanded in the most emphatic manner of its adherents that they should abandon the belief in personal survival."⁴³

5. MAY REAPPEAR AS ANOTHER PERSON.—Epicurus thus clearly taught that when death occurs the soul-atoms and the body-atoms are separated, and the body finally dissolves. Consequently the separated "soul" disappears. It is blown away by the wind, as he put it, and disappears "like smoke" in the air. But the material elements are indestructible. They might, in fact, in the future combine, with the "life-stuff," *in another person*.

But, he said, if so it would be as a *new* creature. The original man is obliterated by death, with no bond of consciousness between the two. The living creature is therefore but temporary, and death no longer concerns him. This proposition the Epicureans never tired of hammering home. The terrors of eternity cast no shadow over the life. One devotes himself to life without repining, filling every moment to the full.

6. IRRECONCILABLE CLASHES BETWEEN STOICS AND EPICUREANS.—The opposition of the Stoics to the Epicureans was occasioned by the extreme materialism and fortuitism of the latter. With Epicurus the universe was an aggregation of blind atoms, compacted and governed by an equally blind chance; with Zeno and his Stoics, it was a divine organism, vital in all its parts, and governed by the immutable decrees of Fate. With Epicurus the gods had nothing to do with human affairs, while with Zeno everything was controlled by superintending Providence.

The Stoics regarded nature as a product of design, whereas the Epicureans explained it as an entirely mechanical product. The Stoics adhered to fatalism, but saw God everywhere; the

⁴³ Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 504. Cf. *Lucretius*, book 3, on "Life and Mind."

⁴⁴ Rohde, *op. cit.*, pp. 505, 506.

Epicureans, as irreligious free thinkers, held the theory of atoms and of necessity.⁴⁵ Such were the irreconcilable differences of these two reactionary groups, both antagonistic to Platonism.

IV. Skeptics—Pyrrho Undermines Basis of Immortal-Soulism

Just as the *pre*-Platonic philosophy was challenged by the appearance and arguments of the skeptical Sophists, so now the *post*-Platonic developments climax with the Pyrrhonian Skeptics, who doubted everything. So a distrust of the powers of reason now followed the period of speculative excesses. The confusion and contradiction of the conflicting standard schools had resulted in the feeling that there are no determining criteria of truth. This induced widespread doubt.

Such was the situation when PYRRHO of Elis (c. 365-c. 275 B.C.), founder of the Skeptics, who, capitalizing on the principle of doubt, added to the confusion produced by the contentions of the Stoics and Epicureans. Pyrrho insisted that, inasmuch as there is no certainty in dogmatic belief, happiness consists in perfect freedom from all mental perturbation. (See Tabular Chart A, page 532.)

Using the weapons devised by the earlier Sophists, the Skeptics now directed them chiefly against ethics. The inductive system, they held, is at best only a probability. Thus the conflicting speculations involved everything in doubt and uncertainty. So the Pyrrhonists, the avowed Skeptics of the age—who boldly questioned the distinctions between true and false, virtue and vice, right and wrong, and advocated emancipation from any sort of moral and religious restraint—held that definitions and inductions add nothing to knowledge.

But in discarding definitions and inductions, they too struck at the heart of the philosophical method.⁴⁶ Thus *indirectly* Pyrrho likewise struck at the dogma of the immor-

⁴⁵ Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, p. 505.

⁴⁶ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 164, 165.

tal soul, as premised upon the speculations of philosophy. Pyrrhonism, however, was short lived. Such skepticism was too negative to satisfy any save a peculiar few. But it helped to prick the bubble of conceit that had developed among the dominant philosophies, including Platonism.

The persistence of the Platonic postulate becomes evident when one sees how it lived on despite the combined opposition of strong reactionary groups. When the conflict of views subsided, Plato's Innate Immortal-Soulism, inconsistent as it was, continued on, conquering and to conquer—next penetrating the ranks of the Roman conquerors. And while the form changed, the essence remained the same.

Chart B

Roman Writers and Philosophers Follow Greek Predecessors

Philosophic Positions Perpetuated; but Materialistic Reactions Predominate; Adroit Recasting Undertaken, Followed by Final Emergence of Modified Neoplatonic School

1. **Manilius** (1st cent. B.C.)—fatalistic pantheism; soul part of World-Soul
2. **Cicero** (106-43 B.C.)—Platonist; eternal pre-existence, or eternal sleep
3. **Lucretius** (c. 96-c. 55 B.C.)—materialist; eternal death-sleep
4. **Catullus** (c. 84-54 B.C.)—sleep of eternal night
5. **Horace** (65-8 B.C.)—eternal sleep in nether world
6. **Vergil** (70-19 B.C.)—spark of World-Soul returns to source
7. **Ovid** (43 B.C.-A.D. 18)—divine spark produced man
8. **Cato** (95-46 B.C.), and Julius Caesar—death is utter end
9. **Seneca** (4 B.C.-A.D. 65)—Stoic; soul continues till next conflagration
10. **Pliny the Elder** (A.D. 23-79)—part of pantheistic world
11. **Tacitus** (c. A.D. 55-117)—believer in fatalism
12. **Epictetus** (c. A.D. 60-120)—Stoic; refusion of soul
13. **Plutarch** (c. A.D. 46-120)—Platonist; Dualist; souls eternal
14. **Juvenal** (c. A.D. 60-c. 140)—death an everlasting sleep
15. **Marcus Aurelius** (A.D. 121-180)—last Stoic; reabsorption into World-Soul
16. **Lucian** (c. A.D. 126-200)—Greek philosophy imported from East
17. **Plotinus** (c. A.D. 205-270)—Dualism; emanation; fusion with the absolute
18. [Porphry (c. A.D. 232-c. 304); Iamblichus (c. A.D. 250-c. 333); Julian (A.D. 332-363)]
19. A.D. 529—Justinian closes academy; pagan philosophy forbidden; philosophers exiled

Pathetic Despair Predominant Among Roman Thinkers

Except for occasional Platonic, Stoic, or Pythagorean holdovers (among whom pantheism, emanation, reincarnation, and reabsorption were common), the ultimate loss of all personality was a recurring view.

Pathetic Despair Predominant Among Roman Thinkers

In the great bulk of Latin and Greek literature belonging to the last century before Christ and the first century after, a strain of despair echoes and re-echoes through the prose and poetry of Rome—lyric, elegiac, tragic, and philosophic.

I. Widespread Revolt Against Platonic Positions

There was widespread revolt against the vaunted claims of the Platonic philosophy. Comparatively few were satisfied with Plato's teaching. Dr. Salmond states significantly, "It made scanty conquests either at the time or in later schools of Greek and Roman thought."¹ As a matter of fact, it was not even accepted by Plato's own immediate disciples—not even by his star pupil, Aristotle, as we have seen. Nevertheless it persisted.

At best it offered hope mainly for the philosopher cult, rather than for mankind as a whole. No perfection was held out for the souls of the nonphilosophical. Moreover, it professed immortality for only the half of a man, for it depreciated and degraded the body. It made the body the source of all evils and defilements, as hampering the way to virtue and knowledge. Death alone offered welcome release from oppression by the body, with purity attainable only through the separation of the soul from the body. Plato's holiness expressly demanded riddance of the body. And the heaven of Platonism's highest aspiration was a bodiless condition. That was the best that Platonism had to offer.

¹ Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 151, 152.



REVIEW PICTURES

While Rome Was Ruling the World, Hellenic Thought and Philosophy Were Still Supreme.

1. BARREN COMFORT OF STOICS, EPICUREANS, AND SKEPTICS.

—The Stoics, whose influence continued for centuries into the Christian Era, though sympathetic with Plato's moral purpose, thought of the soul of man as destined to reabsorption into the great World-Soul after death, and believed that it survived for a certain time but never beyond the world's periodic conflagration.² To them life was a vast cycle of perpetual birth and death without any abiding personality. And the Epicurean was coldly materialistic and skeptical.

The popular refrain of the masses, "Soon we shall fall asleep to wake no more," was the recurring voice of Greek and Roman anthology—poetry, prose, and sepulchral inscription.³

² Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, vol. 2, p. 140.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-147.

The tombs were silent on a blessed immortality, and were mute as to future rewards or punishments.

As before stated, when Christ appeared Hellenic thought ruled the world—a world then controlled by Rome, with Greco-Latin belief and disbelief in mortal conflict. Mankind desperately needed One who could speak with an authority higher than that of the philosophers, One who has the power of an endless life. There was a pathetic longing among Roman thinkers for certainty concerning the soul and the hereafter.

2. MANILIUS: HOLDS A FATALISTIC PANTHEISM.—Many writers in this crucial period were markedly skeptical, some showing undisguised contempt for the Hellenic views. But the pantheistic strain still echoed. That too is significant. Caius MANILIUS (1st cent. B.C.), Roman tribune and legislator, in his astronomical poem taught a fatalistic pantheism, probably derived from Stoic sources.⁴ To him the world itself is God—the World-Soul—man constituting a portion of Deity, with his life and destiny dependent on the stars, the fates steering the course of the world, and each man responsible for his own destiny. That was one concept.

With the exception of Lucretius, we shall present the Roman witnesses with broad rapid strokes, based upon the exhaustive studies of men such as Munich University's professor Johann J. I. von Döllinger, whose masterful treatise covering this area is well documented.⁵ We desire only to sketch the scene as a bridge to the next great section.

3. CICERO: VACILLATES BETWEEN BELIEF AND DOUBT.—Amid the widespread unbelief CICERO (106-43 B.C.), master of rhetoric and celebrated orator, philosopher and statesman, and noted writer of Latin prose, was the only Roman thinker of the day who publicly contended on philosophical grounds for a

⁴ Döllinger, *ibid.*, pp. 136, 137.

⁵ Johann J. I. von Döllinger (1799-1890), celebrated German theologian and historian, was professor of ecclesiastical history at Munich University. Opposing the claim of papal infallibility at the Vatican Council of 1869-1870, he was excommunicated in 1871. He was author of about eight books of great value. His two-volume *The Gentile and the Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ* (Darnell, tr.), affords a definitive coverage of Greek and Roman paganism, religion, and philosophy, and the reaction against the Platonic concept.

real and individual existence of the soul after death. And this was because he was a professed Platonist. The Peripatetics Dicæarchus and Aristoxenus denied the existence of soul. And the Stoic Panætius had renounced the periodic conflagration-of-the-world theory, as well as the temporary duration of the soul.⁶ (On Cicero's chronological sequence see page 616.)

At times even Cicero is inconsistent. For example, he sometimes sees nothing but poetic fancy or ancient superstition in the notion of a retributive future. But in his *Tusculan Disputations* he supported Plato's positions. The soul, he there says, is an entity, divine in origin and eternal in principle. God and the soul are of the same "texture." And after death the soul goes to fellowship with the gods.

But along with his eternal duration of the soul went the customary pre-existence-of-the-soul concept. And with these went the principle of its own movement, within itself—man's soul existing as a being from eternity, subsisting by its own power, indistinguishable from deity, with emanation from the divine spirit. Cicero did not say it was god, but it was divine. This led him to look with high anticipation to the day when he would join the divine communion of souls. Yet he recognized that his arguments were only a "probability."⁷ And while he accepted much of Plato's doctrine, and reproduced not a little of his reasoning, Cicero nevertheless considered Plato's speculative arguments on the *nature* of the soul to be largely "conjecture," and merely a "possibility."⁸

At times Cicero speaks bravely, saying that if he errs regarding immortality, he delights in his error. However, when faced with the sorrow of personal bereavement he is not so confident. He seeks comfort in the concept of the unconsciousness of death, and records, "If there is nothing good in death, at least there is no evil."⁹ But he said:

"If I err in holding the souls of men to be immortal, I do so gladly; nor while life lasts will I suffer this error, in which I delight, to be torn

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122, 141, 142.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-143.

⁸ See Cicero, *Disputationes Tusculanae* i. 27, 31, 38; v. 13; in LCL.

⁹ *Ibid.*, i. 38; cf. Letters, *ad. L. Messin Epp.* v. 21; *ad Toran* vi. 21.

from me. If we are not immortal, then it is desirable for man that he should be extinguished at his hour of departure."¹⁰

Cicero's view of the pre-existence of souls led him to the concept of man's earthly existence being a state of punishment for sins committed in a previous life. But he repudiated this in his *Hortensius* and in *Consolation* upon the death of his own daughter. And he added the disconsolate words, "Not to be born is by far the best thing. . . . But the next best thing is, if you have been born, to die as soon as possible."¹¹ In another place he speaks of punishment after death as an "old fancy." So he vacillated between doubt and hope.

However, most of Cicero's contemporaries were not in agreement with his Platonism. Caesar and Cato held that death was the end of all things, there being neither joy nor sorrow beyond the grave.¹² Vergil, Ovid, and Horace sought comfort and protection in the thought of an eternal sleep in the night of the nether world. Catullus cried to Lesbia, "When the short day is past and gone, the sleep of eternal night awaits us both."¹³ And Seneca said, "There is nothing after death, and death itself is nothing; you will then be with the unborn."¹⁴ And Pliny declared the notion of existence after death to be an invention of childish folly.¹⁵ Döllinger calls attention to a vital point:

"Philosophers utterly failed in grasping the idea of personality. Hemmed in by their material horizon, they understood by the soul a kind of secretion or evaporation of brain, blood, or heart, or a sort of respiration. They described it as a subtle, aerial, or fiery substance; or conceived it to be a mere quality, like the harmony of a musical instrument, which was lost in the dissolution of the body."¹⁶

II. Lucretius—Bleak Materialism and Eternal Death-Sleep

Epicureanism, simplest of all Greek philosophies, penetrated Rome about 175 B.C. A century later Titus LUCRETIVUS Carus (c. 96-c. 55 B.C.), the great Latin poet of his day, con-

¹⁰ Quoted in Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 142.

¹¹ Quoted in Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* iii, 18, 19, in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 90.

¹² Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 153.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 144.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*



Lucretius Voiced a Pronounced Reaction Against the Postulates of Platonism.

temporary of Cicero and himself an Epicurean, wrote his amazing poem *The Nature of the Universe*. This was produced probably about 55 B.C., after profound study of the Greek language and philosophy. He sought to dispel by science all fear of death and destruction. It was abstruse speculation, with some sublime concepts in mystic settings—a poet's portrayal of the then "scientific" outlook.

Lucretius dismissed Divine Providence and an immortal soul alike as empty illusions. He was an antagonist of pagan Roman *religio* ("religion"), with its superstitions and taboos designed to terrorize. But out of the depths of pessimistic skepticism he rises at times to pathetic heights. The tradition is that he died a suicide—consonant with the principles he professed. Here is his actual teaching.

1. BOOK SYNOPSIS REVEALS STARK MATERIALISM.—Translator Ronald E. Latham's Synopsis of *The Nature of the Universe* (pages 21-26), shows that Book 1, on "Matter and Space," deals with the "creative force of nature." It praises Epicurus for "delivering mankind from superstition." Nothing, Lucretius states, is ever "created out of nothing," and "nothing is ever annihilated." Matter exists in the form of "invisible" atoms.

But in addition, the universe contains "empty space"—the universe consisting only of these two. Lucretius refutes the "false" philosophical theories of Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras, insisting that the universe is "boundless," and without a "centre."

Book 2, on the "Movements and Shapes of Atoms," states that the atoms are "always on the move," and that the world was "not made by gods." Furthermore, our world is but one of an "infinite number," self-regulating, and without interference from the gods. But it "had a beginning and will soon have an end."

Book 3, on "Life and Mind," praises Epicurus for revealing the "true nature of the universe," and removing "the fear of death" and of torment after death. It insists that the mind is "part of the body," and that mind and spirit are of a "single corporeal substance." Life depends upon the "union of mind-spirit with body." And mind and spirit, he says, "were born and will die." Lucretius comments on the "blessings of mortality," and declares the "imaginary pains of Hell are symbolic of earthly sufferings."

2. THE TERRIFYING ISSUES OF "DEATH."—At the outset of Book 1 Lucretius speaks of those—

"haunted by the fear of eternal punishment after death. They know nothing of the nature of the spirit. Is it born, or is it implanted in us at birth? Does it perish with us, dissolved by death, or does it visit the murky depths and dreary sloughs of Hades? Or is it transplanted by divine power into other creatures? . . .

"Ennius indeed in his immortal verses proclaims that there is also a Hell, which is peopled not by our actual spirits or bodies but only by shadowy images, ghastly pale" (v. 93).¹⁷

3. THE "IDLE FANCY OF FOOLS."—Lucretius insists that "*nothing can ever be created by divine power out of nothing*" (162)—that is, nothing "can come into existence without atoms."¹⁸ And in reverse, "*nature resolves everything into its*

¹⁷ Ronald Latham, *Lucretius on the Nature of the Universe*, The Penguin Classics, p. 30.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

component atoms and never reduces anything to nothing" (226).¹⁹ If "throughout this bygone eternity there have persisted bodies from which the universe has been perpetually renewed, they must certainly be possessed of immortality. Therefore things cannot be reduced to nothing" (227).²⁰ This he denies.

4. "RARIFIED WIND" LEAVES BODY AT DEATH.—Coming in Book 3 to the heart of the question, Lucretius holds that "mind and spirit are interconnected," and both are "composed of matter" of "very fine texture."²¹ He then declares: "The body at death is abandoned by a sort of rarified wind mixed with warmth, while the warmth carries with it also air."²²

5. BOTH SPIRIT AND BODY ARE MORTAL.—"Vital spirit," he says, is "present in the whole body," as well as these "atoms of spirit," which are "less in magnitude than those composing our body and flesh."²³ Mind is more dominant than spirit. And minds, he adds, are "neither birthless nor deathless."²⁴ The spirit, he opines, is "flimsy stuff composed of tiny particles."²⁵ Then he twice states that spirit is mortal.²⁶ And "without body" the mind alone cannot perform vital functions. So "both alike must be reckoned mortal."²⁷

6. RIDICULES "IMMORTAL SPIRITS" SEEKING BODIES.—Alluding to the belief of some that an "immortal" spirit is "slipped into the body at birth,"²⁸ Lucretius ridicules this reincarnation theory by commenting:

"It is surely ludicrous to suppose that spirits are standing by at the mating and birth of animals—a numberless number of immortals on the look-out for mortal frames, jostling and squabbling to get in first and establish themselves most firmly."²⁹

7. DEATH: ETERNAL SLEEP WITH NO AWAKENING.—Turning to "death," Lucretius comments, "Death is nothing to us and no concern of ours, since our tenure of the mind is mortal."

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 101.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 107.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 108.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 112.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116. See also pp. 117, 118.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

"We shall be no more."³⁰ Therefore we "have nothing to fear in death," since "one who no longer is cannot suffer." "Mortal life has been usurped by *death the immortal*."³¹ Death must be regarded as sleep. And nothing is more "restful than soundest sleep."³² So the alleged torments of Hell are brushed off as the present disciplines of life. Thus Lucretius dismisses "Hell belching abominable fumes" with its "boiling pitch."³³ There simply awaits for all "the same eternal death."³⁴

Such was the bleak prospect and the stark materialism of Epicurean Roman skepticism and disillusionment in 55 B.C. It was a pronounced reaction against the postulates of Platonism and the other philosophies based on the old mythologies and the pantheistic reincarnation and reabsorption theories, often tied in therewith. But that was not all.

III. Skepticism, Pantheism, Emanation, Refusion—All Intermingled

Two classes sought to free themselves from the terrors invested in the prospect of death and the nether world—first the Materialists, who sought to prove that death was to man the absolute end of all; and the later Platonists, who maintained that this world is the Hades, that Heaven is our home, and that death is but an ascent to a better life.

I. CATULLUS AND HORACE: DEATH, SLEEP OF ETERNAL NIGHT.—We pass briefly over Gaius Valerius CATULLUS (c. 84-54 B.C.), celebrated Roman poet and versatile genius, who enjoyed the society of the noted—such as Cicero and Caesar—who declared that he knew of nothing to follow the short day of life but the sleep of eternal night.³⁵ And the same is to be said of HORACE (65-8 B.C.), famous Latin lyric and satirical poet, from the point of common sense, who likewise saw nothing after death but weary night and endless exile, that makes it

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³⁵ *Catullus* v. 4.



Masterful Roman Cicero Publicly Contended for the Continued Existence of the Soul After Death.

To Vergil, Another Roman Poet, the Spark of World-Soul Fire Must Return to Its Source.

Uncertainty and Contradiction Marked the Witness of the Stoic Seneca.

wise to snatch the present hours for pleasure.³⁶ He left the future to the gods.

2. VERGIL: SPARK OF WORLD-SOUL FIRE RETURNS TO SOURCE.—VERGIL (70-19 B.C.), famous Roman epic, dramatic, and idyllic poet, philosopher, and intimate friend of Horace, wrote that there is a world-soul filling and moving the universe, interpenetrating Heaven, earth, sea, sun, moon, beast, and man. "It is divine fire [the Pythagorean concept], bestowing and sustaining universal life." The particles of world-soul, constituting man, descend to the lower world for judgment. Then, it is alleged, a new body is assigned for it to animate. And if, after many migrations, at long last its stains are wiped away, it returns again, like purified ether, to its fount.³⁷ He held to an inexorable destiny.

3. OVID: DIVINE SPARK GAVE BEING TO MAN.—OVID, or Publius Ovidius Naso (43 B.C.-A.D. 18), Roman poet and leading

³⁶ Dollinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 143.
³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137; see *Aenid* vi. 727-751.

writer of the Augustan Age, who was exiled from Rome in A.D. 9, likewise held to this ether-god, or Pythagorean doctrine of souls—that nature herself formed the world out of chaos. And the holy fire, or ether, the power of Heaven, has the heights of Olympus as a dwelling place. Ovid held that a spark of this divine ether descending to earth, gave being to man.³⁸

4. SENECA: UNCERTAINTY AND CONTRADICTION MARK WITNESS.—Stoicism had by now assumed the role of a religion. But with the later Roman Stoics—Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius—there was a strong reaction against certain of its logical subtleties. SENECA (4 B.C.-A.D. 65), celebrated Stoic philosopher, known for his brilliance of language, held that the soul, with kinship to God, would continue on after death, until the next periodic conflagration, after which all things start anew. Thus the blessed spirits will attain to the eternal. But his concept of the state after death was full of conflict and uncertainty.

On another occasion he declared, "There is nothing after death." At times he spoke of the last day of this present life as a birthday to the eternal. He talks of deliverance from the bondage of life, and of a happier state after being "received into the region of the departed." But at still other times he consoles himself with the concept of the "loss of all consciousness," and therefore the impossibility of any future torment. "Death . . . preceded our present existence," and there was nothing disagreeable about it—nor will there be after death.³⁹

5. PLINY: PANTHEISTIC UNIVERSE; MAN PART OF GOD.—PLINY THE ELDER, or Gaius Plinius Secundus (A.D. 23-79), celebrated Roman naturalist, author, lawyer, soldier, and pro-consul, in his *Natural History* explains the universe pantheistically as a divine being—the sun being the supreme deity in nature and the spirit of the whole. Man is possessed of a portion of that spirit. So there is deification of parts of nature and apotheosis of men. The deity is, he says, nothing but the power

³⁸ Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 137, 138.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 141.

of nature—in the sense held by the Stoics.⁴⁰ Yet in another place he says that existence after death is the invention of folly.⁴¹

In his *Natural History* Pliny plainly affirms that death is an everlasting sleep.⁴² And the whole school of Epicureans supported such a position, invoking the combined forces of ridicule and argument in its advocacy. As already seen, their views are ably defended by Lucretius in his *The Nature of the Universe*. And Horace, Juvenal, and Persius concur.

6. EPICTETUS: REFUSION OF SOUL IMMEDIATE AT DEATH.—

EPICTETUS of Hieropolis (c. A.D. 60-120), another celebrated Stoic moralist and philosopher, taught at Rome until A.D. 94, when all philosophers were banished from the city by edict of Domitian. Epictetus seemingly believed that the refusion of the human soul back into the World-Soul takes place immediately upon its separation from the body—man being an emanation from God anyway. Death, he held, is a return, or reunion, of the soul to its kindred elements,⁴³ specifically reverting to the element of fire. To him there is no Hades.

7. PLUTARCH: IDEA OF ANNIHILATION IS INTOLERABLE.—

PLUTARCH (c. A.D. 46-120), however, Greek biographer and high-ranking moralist, and foe of Stoicism, expressly defended the immortality of the soul and a divine providence. As a philosopher he is to be classed among the Platonists, with a heavy leaning toward the prevailing Orientalism. He was also a Dualist, recognizing an eternal principle of evil confronting God from all eternity. Souls were not made, he said, to bloom but for a day and then be annihilated forever.

He leaned openly on the Dionysiac beliefs, though admitting them to be founded on myths. Plutarch disparaged rewards and punishments in an afterlife. And he adds that “the idea of annihilation was intolerable to the Greek mind. If the only choice they had was between entire extinction and an eternity of torment in Hades, they would have chosen the latter.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁴² Pliny, *Historica Naturalis*, ii. 7.

⁴³ Döllinger, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 128, 140.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-133, 145.



To Historian Plutarch, Likewise a Platonist,
the Idea of Annihilation Was Intolerable.

Such was the wide diversity of views afloat at the time. And this was contemporary with Christ and the apostles.

8. **MARCUS AURELIUS: SOUL REABSORBED INTO WORLD-SOUL.**—**MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONIUS** (A.D. 121-180), noted Roman emperor-philosopher of the Stoic persuasion, betrayed a like hesitation as to whether the dissolution and refusion of the soul are immediately upon death or at the final conflagration of the world. He leaned toward the former. However, he was clear on the soul's ultimate disappearance upon its dissolution, with reabsorption in the World-Soul and re-entry into another portion of the universe, this process of dissolution and beginning anew going on to all eternity.⁴⁵ The Stoic philosophers end with the emperor, and confusion becomes more pronounced.

And it should be added just here that **LUCIAN**, or **Lucius Apuleius** (c. A.D. 126-200), satirical writer and Platonic philosopher, pressed the point that much of Greek philosophy was originally brought in from the East. Such testimony is significant.

9. **TACITUS: BELIEVER IN FATALISTIC PRINCIPLE.**—The confessions of **Publius Cornelius Tacitus** (c. A.D. 55-117), greatest of Roman historians and noted legal orator, praetor, consul, and friend of **Pliny the Younger**, are less explicit. He denies the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 141, 175.

conduct of events by divine providence and any appearance of retributive justice in human affairs. He was not sure whether human events are controlled by destiny, immutable necessity, or mere hazard. He was evidently a believer in fatalistic principle.⁴⁶

That is the list. We may therefore rightly say that uncertainty, doubt, confusion, and contradiction prevailed and neutralized one another among the intellectuals, with the greatest influence still exerted by the Stoics. They taught that souls were comprised of ethereal fire, derived from the World-Soul, and continued to exist in a separate state of being for a time after death. But no souls last longer than the general conflagration, when they are reabsorbed, and return to the primal fire.

10. CONCLUSION: BOTH VIEWS LEAD TO EXTINCTION OF PERSONALITY.—These variant views led to two alternatives: (1) holding to the extinction of the soul along with the body; or (2) explaining it is a portion and emanation of the divine World-Soul, to be reabsorbed. If the latter, they expatiated on the heavenly origin of the soul, its descent from the bosom of the Deity to this life, and its return after death to its home. This return was simply a refusion of the part into the whole, from which it had been temporarily separated, and would be accompanied by the *extinction of individual consciousness*. Pantheism, reincarnation, and reabsorption are common—and loss of all personality.

Those who refuse to accept the mythical speculations had to choose between two theories as to the origin of the human race: (1) Either the soul had no more a beginning than the world, both existing from all eternity, through an infinite series of successive generations; or (2) there was an admitted beginning of the race, but not an act of creation. Man emerged, springing forth from the slime of earth, either impregnated by the sun or spontaneously.

But both theories led to the *ultimate loss of all individu-*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

ality. The first had a cycle of perpetual births and deaths; the second left all to blind destiny.⁴⁷ Both presented a dreary prospect. Such was the situation in Roman thought when Christianity was getting under way.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 145.

Alexandrian Jews Forsake Ancestral Platform

I. The Tragedy of the Great Departure

We are about to trace one of the tragedies of ancient church history—the adoption, by one segment of the Jewish Church, of the essential elements of Plato's enticing pagan philosophy concerning the nature and destiny of man. As previously mentioned, it will not be a pleasant journey for us to take, but it is unavoidable if we are to understand how God's chosen people of old became confused by the subtle sophistries of devious reasoning, with one segment adopting these concepts that cast aside the uniform teachings of Moses and the prophets—those holy men of old who wrote under inspiration and set forth the revealed truth of God on this question.

Some questioning minds began to toy with these alluring pagan speculations and, becoming enamored, lost their bearings and brought confusion and tragedy into the ranks of Jewry. Fortunately, not all took the tangent path, fraught with such fateful consequences. Others—and a goodly number at that—remained true to the faith of their fathers. Resultant conflicts and exchanges were sharp. The wanderers strayed into barren deserts, as it were, that were dull and profitless, but nonetheless real and disastrous. We will pass over these arid spots as rapidly as consistent with a balanced portrayal.

Happier will be our experience when we come to survey the stout allegiance of others to the revealed verities of Old Testament Scripture, as the breach widened over the irruption



During the Inter-Testament Period the Jews Were Debating Over Conflicting Views of Truth and Error.

of Platonic Immortal-Soulism in the ranks of Jewry. So we turn to the pathetic record of the great departure and its repercussions that reach over into the Christian Era.

II. Character and Significance of Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Teachings

1. PROPHETS FOLLOWED BY PRIESTS AND PRIESTLY STRUGGLES.

—We now revert to the historic Jews, for it was among the Hebrews that Platonic Immortal-Soulism first began its inroads among believers in Holy Scripture. Following the close of the line of the Old Testament prophets from among the Hebrews came the period of the priests. Two widely different major sects emerged—the eclectic, traditional, formalist Pharisees (the religious), and the skeptical, materialistic Sadducees (the political) whose interests centered in the Temple and on power.

The Pharisees were *eclectic* because their beliefs were

Chart C

COMPARATIVE LISTS OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS, SHOWING SEPTUAGINT
AND ROMAN CATHOLIC ENLARGEMENTS

(Apocryphal Portions Indicated by Italics)

1	2	3	4
Palestinian Jewish	Alexandrian Septuagint	Roman Catholic	Protestant
<i>The Law</i>	Genesis	Genesis	Genesis
Genesis	Exodus	Exodus	Exodus
Exodus	Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus
Leviticus	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers
Numbers	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy
Deuteronomy	Joshua	Josue (Joshua)	Joshua
<i>The Prophets</i>	Judges	Judges	Judges
Joshua	Ruth	Ruth	Ruth
Judges	1 Kings (1 Samuel)	1 Kings (1 Samuel)	1 Samuel
1 Samuel	2 Kings (2 Samuel)	2 Kings (2 Samuel)	2 Samuel
2 Samuel	3 Kings (1 Kings)	3 Kings (1 Kings)	1 Kings
1 Kings	4 Kings (2 Kings)	4 Kings (2 Kings)	2 Kings
2 Kings	1 Chronicles	1 Paralipomenon (1 Chronicles)	1 Chronicles
Isaiah	2 Chronicles	2 Paralipomenon (2 Chronicles)	2 Chronicles
Jeremiah	1 Esdras	1 Esdras (Ezra)	Ezra
Ezekiel	2 Esdras (Ezra and Nehemiah)	2 Esdras (Nehemiah)	Nehemiah
The Twelve	Psalms	<i>Tobias (Tobit)</i>	Esther
(Hosea	Proverbs	<i>Judith</i>	Job
Joel	Ecclesiastes	Esther (10:4 to 16:24 added)	Psalms
Amos	Song (of Songs)	Job	Proverbs
Obadiah	Job	Psalms	Ecclesiastes
Jonah	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>	Proverbs	Song of Solomon
Micah	<i>Wisdom of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus</i>	Ecclesiastes	Isaiah
Nahum	Esther, with additions	Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon)	Jeremiah
Habakkuk	<i>Judith</i>	<i>Wisdom</i>	Lamentations
Zephaniah	<i>Tobit</i>	<i>Ecclesiasticus</i>	Ezekiel
Haggai	Hosea	Isaiah (Isaiah)	Daniel
Zechariah	Amos	Jeremias (including Lamenta- tions), with <i>Baruch</i>	Hosea
Malachi)	Micah	Ezechiel	Joel
<i>The Writings</i>	Obadiah	Daniel [3:24-90 (<i>Song of the Three Children</i>), Chap. 13 (<i>Susanna</i>), and Chap. 14 (<i>Bel and the Dragon</i>) added]	Amos
Psalms	Jonah		Obadiah
Proverbs	Nahum		Jonah
Job			Micah
			Nahum
			Habakkuk

COMPARATIVE LISTS OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS—Continued

1	2	3	4
Palestinian Jewish	Alexandrian Septuagint	Roman Catholic	Protestant
Song of Songs	Habakkuk	Osee (Hosea)	Zephaniah
Ruth	Zephaniah	Joel	Haggai
Lamentations	Haggai	Amos	Zechariah
Ecclesiastes	Zechariah	Abdias (Obadiah)	Malachi
Esther	Malachi	Jonas (Jonah)	
Daniel	Isaiah	Micheas (Micah)	(Without added
Ezra	Jeremiah	Nahum	Apocrypha)
Nehemiah	<i>Baruch</i>	Habacuc (Habakkuk)	
1 Chronicles	Lamentations	Sophonias (Zephaniah)	
2 Chronicles	<i>Epistle of Jeremy</i>	Aggeus (Haggai)	
(Without Apocryphal	Ezekiel	Zacharias (Zechariah)	
additions)	Daniel, with additions of	Malachias (Malachi)	
	<i>Song of the Three Children</i>	<i>1 Machabees</i>	
	<i>Susannah</i>	<i>2 Machabees</i>	
	<i>Bel and the Dragon</i>		
	<i>1 Maccabees</i>		
	<i>2 Maccabees</i>		
	<i>3 Maccabees</i>		
	<i>4 Maccabees</i>		
	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>		
	<i>Enoch</i>		
	<i>Odes, including the</i>		
	<i>prayer of Manasses</i>		

COMPARATIVE LISTS OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS, WITH APOCRYPHAL ENLARGEMENTS (IN ITALICS)

It will be observed that the Palestinian standard list (*without* the Apocrypha) is restored in the standard Protestant versions.¹ On the contrary, the Alexandrian *Septuagint*,² or "Larger Canon" (*with* Apocrypha), is largely followed by the Roman Catholic Vulgate (authorized by the Council of Trent, 1546).³ Incidentally, the post-Nicene church list of Hippo (3d Council of Carthage, 4th cent.) included six apocryphal books,⁴ whereas the Medieval Waldensian list, in the Confession of Faith,⁵ states that the apocryphal books are extracanonical. The significance of the four lists, the Alexandrian factor, is obvious. (Cf. *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 1, pp. 76-85.)

¹ See *The Holy Bible According to the Masoretic Text. A New Translation.*

² See *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint*, ed. by Henry Barclay Swete, vols. 1-3.

³ *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (trans. by H. J. Schroeder), session 4, April 8, 1546, pp. 17, 18.

⁴ Charles Joseph Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 400.

⁵ Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont*, pp. 30, 31.

drawn from a number of systems; *traditional* because they placed oral tradition on a parity with Scripture; and *formalist* because they often neglected weightier matters for scrupulous detail. The Pharisees were the popular party, stressing religious freedom and emphasizing synagogue worship.

On the other hand, the Sadducees were *skeptical*, because they openly denied the Pharisaic postulate of disembodied souls, angels, and spirits. They were *materialistic* because they rejected belief in retribution in an afterlife, and particularly in the resurrection—explaining away those statements in the Old Testament referring to a future life. The Sadducees, however, never had the following of the masses.

In addition, a third Jewish sect was the Essenes, the "monks," as it were, stressing piety, justice, benevolence, and a hallowed way of life. They lived in communities, linked together by common beliefs and practices. And they were confined to Palestine and Syria.

The later Zealots in the early Christian Era were the party of revolt, who had broken away from the Pharisees. They were men of military action, devoted to national independence, who took the sword and fanatically resisted the Roman rule to the death. In fact, it was their resistance that led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

During this inter-Testament period, in the cross currents of Palestinian Judaism, the Pharisees and Sadducees were in constant conflict, somewhat like the Fundamentalists and Modernists of Protestantism today. Nevertheless, both worshiped in the same Temple, and together formed the Sanhedrin—the supreme governing body of seventy members—with first one group ascendant, then the other, and with the two factions ever struggling for the supremacy.

The Sadducees cared little about preserving the purity of the Jewish faith, but were absorbed with the enlargement of political power and prestige. But they were never popular. And with the destruction of Jerusalem the Sanhedrin ended, and the Sadducees ceased to exist. Thus the Pharisees were

left to impose their concepts, and concentrated on worship in the synagogue. The legalistic literature of Judaism was collected in the *Mishnah*,¹ about A.D. 200, and the *Talmud*² followed, between A.D. 200 and 500.

2. APOCRYPHAL AND APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS APPEAR.—The gap between the writing of the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New has often been misconceived as a bleak, barren, and silent period. Nothing could be farther from the truth. These centuries were, in fact, remarkable ones, and anything but barren or silent. Instead, they were filled with intense literary activity, for this was the time when the Jewish apocryphal books were in the process of production and circulation.

The Apocrypha,³ separate from Scripture, was a unique admixture of fact, fancy, and fiction. Truth and error were intermingled. The component books included not only historical and literary treatises but a collection of apocalyptic missives brought forth by mystics and seers, and left on record for the centuries. Some of the Jews accepted them as canonical; ⁴ others rejected them as noncanonical and apocryphal. But they were neither forbidden nor suppressed.

During this critical period many were deeply concerned over conflicting views of truth and error that were current, as well as gravely apprehensive over things to come. The Messianic hope found highly figurative expression, and an increasingly high expectancy marked the era. Many solemnly declared that events of worldwide import and dimension were destined to occur in the predicted latter times, and that the climax of human affairs would be marked by divine interposition. Thus

¹ *Mishnah* (Hebrew, "instruction")—the authoritative collection of Jewish oral law that forms the basis of both the Palestinian and the Babylonian versions of the Talmud.

² *Talmud*—the compilation that embodies the *Mishnah*, or oral teaching of the Jews, and the *Gemara*, or collection of the discussions of the *Mishnah*. The smaller Jerusalem Talmud (c. A.D. 200) gives the discussions of the Palestinian rabbis, whereas the larger and more important Babylonian Talmud (c. A.D. 500) is the authoritative guide to spiritual life.

³ *Apocrypha* (from the Gr. "hidden")—the fourteen added books of the Old Testament appearing in the Greek Septuagint but not found in the Hebrew canon being excluded by the non-Hellenistic Palestinian Jews, and likewise excluded from the Protestant A.V., R.V., et cetera. They were, however, retained in the Latin Vulgate and in the Roman Catholic Douay Version.

⁴ *Canon* (from the Gr. "measuring rod," or "rule")—a list, or catalogue, of the acknowledged inspired writings of the Old, and later of the New, Testament.

the apocalyptic literature made its appearance, giving utterance to new concepts and often leading away from Judaic patterns of previous centuries.

Significantly enough, the question most constantly and ardently discussed was that of eschatology, or the multiple doctrine of the last things—including the nature of the soul, the state and place of the dead, the nature of the resurrection, future rewards and punishments, and the fate of both the wicked and the righteous. That is why an understanding of this literature is incumbent upon us.

The time period of the writing of the Apocrypha covers roughly the last two centuries prior to the Christian Era and the first century A.D. The production of these Jewish treatises consequently continued until the apostles had actually completed the writing of the books of the New Testament canon. The New Testament did not therefore appear in the midst of a literary vacuum, as regards our quest.

3. PSEUDEPIGRAPHIA INVOKES PRESTIGE OF FORMER PROPHETS.—The names of former Jewish prophets and leaders were also invoked in support of various of these apocryphal productions. Although the activity of the Hebrew prophets had ended and the Old Testament canon was closed, these apocalyptic writings were frequently sent forth under the name of some ancient Hebrew worthy in order to add greater weight to these new predictions of things to come—such as *The Book of Enoch*, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, *The Assumption of Moses*, et cetera.

These were accordingly called pseudepigraphical⁵ writings. Although of unknown authorship, and of none-too-certain dating, they nevertheless afford a valuable insight into this crucial transition period in Jewish thinking and Judaism's changing outlook—and into the penetration of Platonism into Jewry. Historically, they were actually written and widely read, and exerted considerable influence at the time, as well

⁵ *Pseudepigrapha*—writings ascribed to some other than their real author, with a view to giving them enhanced authority—as of Enoch, Moses, Solomon, Baruch, Ezra.

as subsequently—even to this day. They are therefore important in our quest.

4. INFLUENCED BY THINKING OF SURROUNDING NATIONS.— Thus it was that these compositions of the Jews—historical, apocalyptic, ethical, mystical, and fictional—were definitely influenced by the impact of the thinking of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, and especially the Greeks under whom the Jews had been subjected in the successive captivities of the centuries. Such is the background setting of the Jewish inter-Testamental apocryphal and apocalyptic literature.

Some of these productions were akin to Dante's *Divine Comedy* or Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Some reflected the thinking and feeling of their age; some forecast the future. And all of them molded Jewish religious thought, especially on the nature and destiny of man. Some of these writings, it will be found, were in harmony with Old Testament truth; others were sharply at variance therewith. And some of the incipient errors of this pre-Christian Era were ere long to develop into full-blown departure from the historic faith of their fathers.

5. APOCRYPHA EXCLUDED FROM PALESTINIAN CANON.— There is another important point that should be noted here: The apocryphal books, included in the "larger" Alexandrian *Greek* Septuagint translation, were excluded from the Palestinian *Hebrew* canon. This fact must not be missed. They were in the Alexandrian version only, and were not accepted at the Jerusalem base. Thus, while the Alexandrian Septuagint translators took certain lesser liberties with the Hebrew text—expanding, abbreviating, transposing, and otherwise modifying—their revolutionary and far-reaching innovation was the adding of these fourteen apocryphal books to the Old Testament canon, *all of which were produced after the close of the Old Testament canon*.

But the New Testament apostle-writers of the newborn Christian Church did not recognize them as canonical. And scholarly, conservative Church Fathers—like Athanasius, Greg-

ory of Nazianzus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Julius Africanus, and Jerome—protested against including these Alexandrian accretions in the canon.⁶ And it is also to be observed that the later difference between the Protestant Old Testament canon and that of Rome is precisely this difference between the Palestinian canon and the larger Alexandrian canon.

6. EXTENSIVE COVERAGE JUSTIFIED AND IMPERATIVE.—Because of the obviously vital bearing that all this and much more has upon our quest, we shall go rather fully into the historic background. We will trace in this introductory chapter the results of the pressures exerted upon Israel during her captivities, the sources of Judaism's departures, and the several related factors.

The significance of the important witness of the extra-canonical Jewish literature of the inter-Testamental period climaxes with the witness of the famous Dead Sea scrolls and their epochal testimony. And the far-reaching, contrasting innovations of Philo Judaeus form their tragic counterpart.

III. Historical Background of Jewish Captivities and Decline

We would stress the point that, as the setting for the crucial developments that come within the field of our quest, it is essential that we have the historical background of the successive Jewish captivities and final decline clearly before us. Let us therefore go back to the sixth century B.C.

1. SUBJUGATION BY BABYLON, THEN BY PERSIA.—In 587 B.C., the Jewish nation, having steadily declined since the days of Solomon, was nearly annihilated at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the first Temple⁷ and Jerusalem and the remnant

⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus and Epiphanius questioned their canonicity, and in the west Jerome especially would not admit them into the Hebrew list as canonical. On the contrary, Ambrose and Augustine placed them on the same footing as canonical Scriptures.

⁷ There were three temples: (1) that of Solomon, the great central sanctuary of Israel, which was destroyed in 586 B.C., in the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem; (2) that of Zerubabel, the rebuilding beginning in 520/19 B.C., desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, and rededicated under Judas Maccabaeus; and (3) the great Herodian Temple, begun in 19 B.C. and destroyed in A.D. 70, when the Temple worship and its priesthood ceased.



were carried into captivity in Babylon.⁸ In Babylon, however, Nebuchadnezzar permitted the Hebrew exiles to retain much of their freedom and to preserve their religious faith and practices.

Then in 539 the Persian leader Cyrus conquered Babylon, and in his first year as king of Babylon he issued a decree permitting the Jews to return to Palestine. The second Temple was constructed in Jerusalem, under Zerubbabel, and completed in 515 B.C. Ezra, and later Nehemiah, returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the city walls and restored the observance of the law.

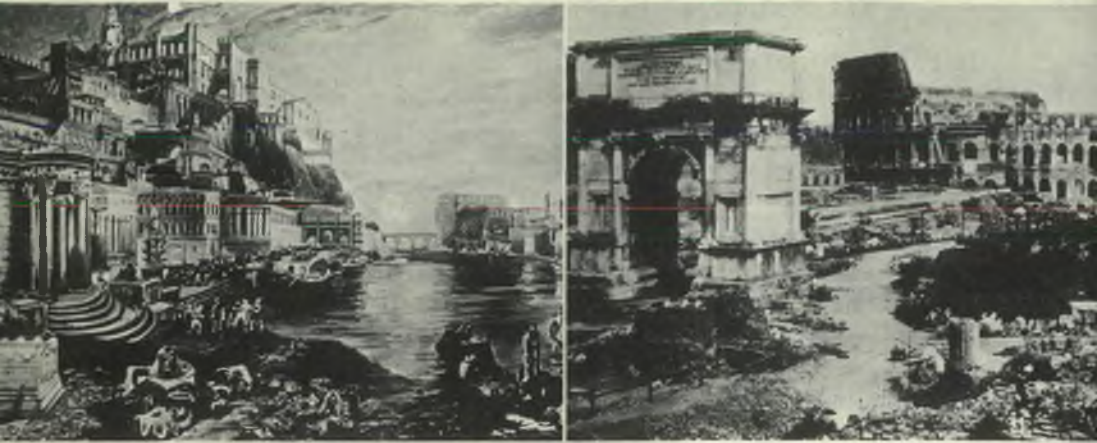
2. SYRIAN OPPRESSION AND MACCABEAN REVOLT.—Darkness then fell upon Palestinian affairs. The seclusion was broken in 332 B.C. by the appearance at Jerusalem of Alexander the Great. But after his death Palestine fell under the rule of the Ptolemies (323-c. 200), and the Jews became the object of contention between the rival dynasties of the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria.

After Judea fell into the hands of Syria, a Hellenizing process made rapid progress among the Jews. But under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164/63), the struggle between the Hellenic and Hebraic influences came to the fore. Judaism was declared illegal, the observance of its religious practices was made a capital offense, and the Jews were compelled to worship idols.

Under the revolt beginning in 168 B.C., Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers resisted by force of arms and effective bargaining. The Syrians were finally compelled to give independence to the Jews. Simon Maccabaeus was voted high priest and ethnarch (or ruler) in 141/40 B.C.—these positions then becoming hereditary.

3. ROME'S DOMINANCE, JERUSALEM'S DESTRUCTION, AND THE DIASPORA.—A dispute among rival brothers over the throne led

⁸ The Jews in Palestine were under Babylonian rule (605-539 B.C.), Persian rule (539-332 B.C.), Alexander, the Ptolemies, and the Seleucids (332-168 B.C.), the Maccabees (168-63 B.C.), and under the Romans from 63 B.C.



Rome in the Heyday of Its Power Was the Scene of the Rise and Spread of the Christian Faith, With Its Message to Man of Life Only in Christ.

to the invoking of the help of Rome in 65 B.C. As a result Pompey marched on Jerusalem and ended Judea's independence in 63 B.C. When Antipater was poisoned Herod assumed authority, and was eventually made king of Judea (40 B.C.) by appointment of the Roman Senate. He gained control of Palestine in 37 B.C., and began rebuilding the Temple. Because murder and outrage marked his reign he was hated by the Jews.

After his death Palestine was divided among his sons. And after a decade Emperor Augustus annexed Judea and Samaria as a Roman province, ruled over by a procurator. But the country seethed with discontent and rebellion, fomented by the Jewish Zealots in Galilee. This was roughly the period of Philo and Josephus.

Under Pontius Pilate, Jesus was crucified in A.D. 31. For a brief period Emperor Claudius reunified Palestine under the kingship of Agrippa, grandson of Herod. Then most of it was again put under procurators. Because of subsequent misgovernment the people were incited to revolt, and by A.D. 66 the Jews rebelled, and open warfare broke out against the Romans. In A.D. 70 the Temple was destroyed by Titus, and soon all Palestine was in Roman hands. Judea's independence was

buried under the ruins of the city and the Temple. After Simon bar Cocheba's rebellion (A.D. 132-135), Jerusalem was made a Gentile city, and barred to the Jews. Such was the historical panorama.

Next note the impact of the captivities of the Jews upon their thinking as regards the nature and destiny of the soul.

IV. Triple Exposure to Immortality Postulate in Three Captivities

Turning next to the relationships of this checkered history to the changing Jewish understanding of the nature and destiny of the soul, we first note that prior to the age of the Maccabees (168-63 B.C.) the Jews had no important writings outside the Old Testament. There were, of course, some archeological inscriptions, but the canonical Scriptures stood alone in their sublime majesty and authority. Then human comments, reasonings, developments, and inferences began to appear. But these came after Israel had felt the impact of special pressures, particularly under the Grecian influence, the last of a succession of exposures to foreign influences. As just noted, the series embraced the Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian captivities. Each had its own particular emphasis and focal points of pressure. Note them.

1. EGYPTIAN IMMORTAL-SOULISM AND TRANSMIGRATION.—

In their early captivity in Egypt the Jews first came in contact with a clearly defined postulate of the Innate Immortality of the soul and a corresponding future retribution. Coupled with these was the notion of the transmigration of souls.⁹ This latter teaching is, of course, fundamentally at variance with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. This Egyptian exposure lasted about two centuries, terminating in the fifteenth century B.C.

⁹ Technically termed "metempsychosis"—the doctrine that souls migrate from one body into another, until complete purification has been achieved.

2. PERSIAN RETRIBUTIONISM AND DEADLY DUALISM.—Next, during their subjection to the Persian power, the Jews came in contact with Eastern Zoroastrianism, with its *Zend-Avesta*¹⁰ and its doctrine of future retributions—involving the resurrection of the body and the eternal reward of the righteous at a future judgment, and corresponding punishment of the wicked. This system, which was allegedly based upon a special *revelation*, not on philosophical speculation, and which involved the deadly pall of Dualism,¹¹ left its imprint, though it did not immediately change Hebrew teachings.

3. GREEK IMMORTALISM BASED ON PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATION.—Then finally, during the period of Alexander and his successors, the Jews came into close contact with a doctrine of Innate Immortality of the soul and future eternal retribution based not on a professed revelation but on *philosophical speculation*, or reasoning.

This involved the concept of pre-existence and transmigration of souls, based upon the premise of the soul's alleged divine, immortal, and eternal nature—as a kind of self-existent, eternal deity. These positions were developed by Plato, and repeated by Cicero as derived from Plato—for the philosophical systems of the Greeks and Romans were substantially the same. This third period extended until the time of Christ.

4. ANTIOCHUS SEEKS TO REPLACE JEWISH USAGES WITH GRECIAN.—The age of the Maccabees forms part of this third period, and completed the great circuit of exposure to foreign influences upon the Jewish mind. This Maccabean age began with a period of intense religious persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes. It was an epoch of crisis, as Antiochus undertook the eradication of the religious teachings and

¹⁰ *Avesta*—sacred book of the Zoroastrians or Parsis, setting forth the religious belief of the ancient Persians.

¹¹ *Dualism*—a metaphysical system which holds that good and evil are the outcome, or product, of separate and equally ultimate first causes. The world was made by Ormuzd, the good god, while Ahriman, the evil spirit, tempts man to wrong. But God will finally triumph over evil, and all souls eventually pass over the "bridge of decision" (from which some must first fall into purifying flames), and enjoy eternal bliss.

practices of the Jews, and their replacement with those of Greece.

As we have seen, Antiochus captured Jerusalem, plundered the Temple, massacred the people, superimposed the altar of Jupiter upon that of Jehovah, and defiled the Temple by sacrifices of swine's flesh. He sought to destroy the Law of Moses by invoking the death penalty upon those possessing copies, and prohibiting the Temple services, as well as the keeping of the Sabbath and circumcision. The heroic stand of Judas Maccabees and his brothers in behalf of the Jewish faith is one of the classics of religious history. Their wars were based upon deep religious convictions.

5. APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS EMERGE DURING MACCABEAN PERIOD.—It was following such cruel circumstances, during the two centuries just prior to the Christian Era, that the earliest non-Biblical declarations of the Jews on human destiny began to appear—*after*, be it noted, the establishment of the kingdom of the Maccabees. It was during this period that the two leading concepts of future rewards and retributions began to come into focus, one of which had not been held, prior to this, by the Jews. And it also began to be espoused by the Christian Church from the second century of the Christian Era onward.

These two major positions were: (1) The older concept of the eternal blessedness of the righteous through *bestowed* immortality, along with the *ultimate destruction* of the wicked; and then (2) the new concept of the eternal blessedness of the *innately* immortal righteous and the *Eternal Torment* of the immortal wicked. And to these must be added a third position that came in to a limited degree—the eternal blessedness of the *innately* immortal righteous and the *final restoration* of the indefeasibly immortal wicked, *after limited remedial punishment*.

All three positions came to be held and defended by some among the Jews by the time of Christ's public ministry. And all three views came to be embraced among the early Christians



DAVID BERGER, ARTIST

COURTESY, BEECH AIRCRAFT CORP.

Alexander's Goal Was That the Glories of Greece Should Ultimately Infuse All Civilizations and Cultures.

by the middle of the third century A.D. And the Jewish views had a marked bearing upon their Christian espousal.

6. PAGAN DUALISM MAKES ITS IMPRESS.—In this connection, one further factor should not be overlooked—that for centuries before Christ the dualistic thesis of two eternal, self-existent powers, or gods—one good and the other evil, and each creating its own system—was persistently promulgated. This point is vital, for it logically involves the contention of the eternal duration of evil, as well as of good—in other words, the Eternal Torment of the immortally wicked. (Some, however, held that good was in the ultimate to be victorious.)

The Jews were made aware of this dualistic concept, which originated in Persia and first affected the North African group. Later it touched the Christians and made its impress upon the Christian followers of Tertullian of Carthage—likewise in

North Africa. The third position was sponsored by Origen of Alexandria and his Restorationist followers. This places the threefold picture before us. These three schools will all be noted in due course.

Next let us note Alexandria, focal point for the new developments.

V. Alexandria—Intellectual Center of Learned World

1. ALEXANDER'S VISION OF GREEK INTELLECTUAL DOMINANCE.—In his subjugation of the Persian world Alexander the Great simultaneously brought the Jewish race under Grecian rule. His ambitious goal was that the genius of Greece should ultimately infuse all civilizations, first with the Greek language and then its literature, customs, and philosophy.

To this end he founded the city of Alexandria, which became not only the crossroads and "mixing bowl" of the nations, and a center of political power, commerce, and wealth, but the hub of literary and scientific development. Alexander envisioned it as the intellectual metropolis of the learned world. Scores of Greek cities developed around the Mediterranean basin, and hosts of Jews swarmed to these cities.

2. PTOLEMIES AND SELEUCIDS STRUGGLE FOR MASTERY.—After Alexander's death the struggle for mastery soon narrowed down to the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. The Ptolemies transferred more than one hundred thousand Jews into Egypt, which figure grew to a million by the time of Christ. These exiles were thrust into a new environment, a new language, and the involvements of a new Greek philosophy. In the market places they heard men discussing the lofty idealism and intriguing philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno. In time they began to feel the pull and the power of the surrounding Greek intellectualism, with its focal point in Alexandria. They studied its language, its history, and its philosophy, and were moved thereby.



In the Vast Alexandrian Library, With Its Amazing Assemblage of Scrolls, Hebrew Students Were Inducted Into Greek Philosophy.

But the Jews of Palestine, caught between two fires, remained conservative and traditional. Thus a definite cleavage developed, *Palestinian* Judaism maintaining independence of thought, with views definitely, if not radically, different from the later *Alexandrian* Jews with their Platonic anthropology.

The Syrian tyranny and the accession of Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes marked a period of anguish for the Jews. We repeat, for emphasis, that Antiochus suppressed the Jewish religion, massacred the Jews, pillaged the Temple of its treasures, turned it over to the worship of Zeus, prohibited all sacrifices and services under pain of death, and caused swine's flesh to be offered on the altar. He transformed Jerusalem into a Greek city, garrisoned by Syrians. But under the Maccabean revolt the Temple services were restored by the Jewish patriots.

3. HEBREW STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO GREEK LEARNING.— Meantime Alexandria was not only the meeting place of Europe, Asia, and Africa but also to a large extent the focal point of western Judaism. Alexandria's vast library of more than a half million papyrus rolls represented the accumulated learning of the nations. Its academies, its vast museum (actually a royal university), its halls of philosophy, and school of medicine attracted scholars from all over the world, many thousands converging there from all lands. Historians, poets, and philosophers came to sit at the feet of Greek masters.

And here also in the multiple halls of the library and university *Hebrew students read Greek philosophy and poetry*. Inevitably yet imperceptibly the charm and brilliance of Hellenism began to captivate the mind of the Alexandrian Jews. After the Greek language was adopted by them it soon became necessary for the Scriptures to be translated into the Greek Septuagint. This, be it noted, was begun under the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, which translation became a sort of "people's Bible" for the Jews of the Dispersion.

The next step was to attempt to explain Judaism to the Greeks—to present an apologetic for its faith, so as to appeal to Greek thought. This took the form of such books as *Ecclesiasticus*, written originally in Hebrew by Jesus the son of Sira, and translated into Greek by his grandson, probably about 132 B.C.; the *Books of the Maccabees*, 2 *Enoch* (the *Slavonic Book of Enoch*). The *Sibylline Oracles* sought to parallel current heathen myths with the stories of the Old Testament, but tintured with Hellenic terms. This literature was a strange commingling of Platonic, Jewish, Rabbinic, Socratic, and Egyptian elements.

VI. Process Whereby the Jews Changed Their Anthropology

1. SHIFTING FROM THE ANCESTRAL FOUNDATIONS.—Commendably the Jews held tenaciously to their monotheism. On this they never yielded, never ceasing to denounce the multi-

ple gods of the polytheistic nations. But they began to borrow Greek terms to expound their own distinctive beliefs. In the Septuagint translation, for example, they did not coin new Greek terms, but employed existing Greek ideology, thus opening the door to misunderstanding, confusion, and compromise.

Next, they found and studied those Greek philosophers who had risen above idol veneration and worshiped the one invisible God. They then sought to show that the supreme god of the philosophers is actually the same as the one Supreme God of the Hebrews.

Finally, they began to present their beliefs in accommodated philosophical form. For instance, they attempted to show that the Moses story of Creation really sets forth the best in pagan cosmogony. They felt that with God as Creator there was a basis of kinship here, and common ground. And there was much emphasis on divine wisdom, as in the apocalyptic "Wisdom" literature (the collected sayings and parables of Israel's sages),¹² appearing about this time, which paralleled certain pagan positions.

2. PRESENTED RELIGIOUS VIEWS IN PHILOSOPHICAL SETTING.—The Alexandrian Jews did not repudiate Greek philosophy, but used it to set forth their own viewpoint. They made it clear that, while the Jews rejected the heathen deities, they were not atheists. Instead, they sought to present their religion as a *superior* "philosophy," somewhat akin to Platonic philosophy, which they often cited. That was the situation when PHILO (c. 20 B.C.-c. A.D. 50) appeared, and carried the principle of synthesis to its disastrous ultimate lengths. And this involved in particular a radical departure on the nature and destiny of man—or their anthropology.

3. TRANSMITTED FROM JEWS TO CHRISTIANS.—The apocryphal literature was often characterized by weird, cryptic,

¹² For example, *The Wisdom of Solomon* 3:11; 4:19, in the Apocrypha, Greek and English, Septuagint Version, pp. 56, 58.

and mysterious but intriguing imagery. Nevertheless it exerted a widespread influence. Apocalyptic imagination was given full rein, and there were multiple assurances of the restoration of Israel through divine judgments and supernatural intervention, destined to end the reign of sin and establish God's kingdom. As stated, fourteen of these apocryphal writings were included, in whole or part, in the canon list of the Greek Septuagint of Alexandria. And as mentioned, these were later incorporated in Jerome's Vulgate, and finally by the Roman Catholic Church in the Douay Version of Counter Reformation fame. That is the line of transmission from Jewish to Christian ranks.

As one able writer aptly put it, the apocalyptic imagination "swept the strings," and "soared on the wings of speculation." While the Sacred Canon had closed, pseudonymous writers continued to assume the prophetic role and the predictive style, often, as mentioned, feigning the name of a former prophet or leader in order to obtain prestige—such as "Enoch," "Baruch," "Solomon," "Ezra." And though these pseudepigraphal writings did not find their way into the canon, they were widely read notwithstanding, some being quoted even more widely than the incorporated apocryphal books, strange as it may seem.

4. PHILO FUSES IT INTO A SYSTEM.—Such was the situation when Philo of Alexandria appeared on the scene, which was now all set for revolutionary "advances"—or at least for sweeping changes. In him this Alexandrian trend came to a climax, and sporadic thinking on the Innate Immortality of the soul and the Eternal Torment of the wicked was fused into a movement, a system, and a school of thought. And students came from all parts to study under him. A revolutionary change of thinking was taking place.

Let us now note these general developments in more specific form as they pertain to the soul, the hereafter, and the unseen world.

VII. Source of Revolutionary Concepts of Unseen World

It is apparent that throughout this new inter-Testament apocalyptic literature the hereafter, or life beyond the grave, was unquestionably the predominant theme. By the time of Jesus there was widespread expectation among the Pharisees of *life beyond the grave uninterrupted by death*. But there was a long and intriguing background behind it all. This concept had developed slowly but steadily during the three-hundred-year interval between the Testaments. It sprang from the popular apocalyptic writings produced during this disillusioning period, and was brought in to "brighten the valley of the shadow of death," as one writer puts it.

1. REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPTS DEVELOPED IN TIME OF MACCABEES.—As noted, when the Jewish commonwealth fell with the destruction of the Temple under Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian captivity began. At this time synagogues were introduced for nonsacrificial congregational worship, and the thoughts of the Jews turned more and more toward the future life of the individual soul. The very foundations of earthly expectation about them now seemed shattered.

Throughout Old Testament times the Hebrew *she'ól* had been considered the vague "abode of all the dead," for good and bad alike—equivalent to the grave.¹³ The dark underworld, the nether world of silence and sleep, was like the *hadēs* in the Greek. Its inmates were the dead, and it was *not* a place of conscious torment. But, owing to the outside contacts and influences mentioned, the conviction developed with some that *she'ól* is "not the final curtain to the drama of life," as aptly expressed. There must be reward or retribution beyond the grave. And, according to Rabbi S. Zeitlin, this conception of rewards and punishments in the next world came into focus and was *developed in the time of the Maccabees*.¹⁴

¹³ G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, vol. 2, p. 289.

¹⁴ S. Zeitlin, *History of Second Commonwealth*, p. 52.

2. PERSIAN IMPACT STRENGTHENS RESURRECTION CONCEPT.

—It was during the period of exile under Persia that the Zoroastrian stress on Dualism and on the resurrection came to be accentuated among the Jews—the struggle between the forces of good and evil, to end in the triumph of good, and with the resurrection of the dead to vindicate the righteous. But this resurrection to *eternal life* was to be the sole prerogative of the righteous. And we should pause to observe, just here, that the Jews did not hesitate to appropriate the thought and incorporate the teachings of other peoples or cultures—so long as they did not appear to be alien to the genius of Judaism. This is attested by the scholarly Rabbi Israel Levinthal:

“We often do not realize how much the Jews were influenced in their cosmological and eschatological conceptions by the Babylonians, who had a fixed notion of the cosmic system which held sway until the days of Copernicus—who spoke with such authoritativeness about the seven planetary spheres, the seven heavens one on top of the other, and, by way of symmetry, the seven hells, one below the other [appearing in the apocalyptic literature]. And so, too, it is now generally recognized that there was a marked influence through the meeting with the Persians, and their elaborate and intricate teachings about the hereafter. This sudden contact with other minds and cultures was a powerful factor in shaping the eschatological views of the Jews.”¹⁵

And this principle applies particularly to the inter-Testament period.

It should also be emphasized here that apart from its Old Testament origin the truth of the resurrection had found its chief supporting emphasis in Persian Zoroastrianism. It was not found in Egypt or in Greece, and Greek philosophy was antagonistic to it. Thus it was that a Persianized-Pharisaic theology as to the resurrection came to prevail in a substantial section of Jewry.

3. SPECULATIONS CRYSTALLIZE AS TO INTERMEDIATE STATE.

—Then *she'ol* began to be considered by some as an inter-

¹⁵ Israel H. Levinthal, *Judaism*, p. 158.

mediate state—a kind of prelude or vestibule to Heaven or Hell, a preliminary period of punishment (as in the pseudepigraphal *Enoch* xxii. 9-13), with the righteous, upon death, entering at once into the life of blessedness. And ere long with some, such speculation became belief—if not indeed dogma.

Fantastic speculations on Paradise developed (as in the books of *Enoch* and the *Jubilees*). Sometimes Paradise was conceived to be on earth, sometimes in Heaven—with an upper paradise, and a lower paradise as a section of *she'ol*,¹⁶ and Heaven as the abode of the conscious, living, righteous dead. Angelology was stressed, as was the case with other peoples of the time, with a highly developed heavenly hierarchy as instruments to carry out the mission of God. This is found, for example, in the *Jubilees*, *Ethiopic Enoch*, *2 Esdras*, and *2 Baruch*.

Dr. Levinthal also interestingly states that "according to the testimony of most scholars, this literature was the product of the Essenes," who had separated themselves from the common expectations of life.¹⁷ (This will be noted further as we come to the important witness of the Dead Sea scrolls.) Moreover, in this time the names of angels were brought in, some of them gleaned from Babylon.¹⁸ And demonology was likewise stressed, with the kingdom of evil ruled by Satan. The picture was filling out.

4. CLIMAX REACHED IN PLATONIC CONCEPTS UNDER PHILO.

—Coming now to the climax in this preview, we find that the Jews of Egypt (particularly of Alexandria) began definitely to adopt the Platonic concept of the Innate Immortality of

¹⁶ This later crept into the Apostles' Creed—the descent into Hell, or Hades, phrase.

¹⁷ Levinthal, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹⁸ Michael, the protecting angel; Gabriel, the revealing angel; Uriel, watcher over *she'ol*; Raguel, watcher over the stellar universe; Remiel, angel of judgment; and Phanuel, angel of resurrection (R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 201, *Enoch* xx. 1-8). ¹⁹Uriel, one of the holy angels, who is over the world and over Tartarus. Raphael, one of the holy angels who is over the spirits of men. Raguel, one of the holy angels who takes vengeance on the world of the luminaries. Michael, one of the holy angels, to wit, he that is set over the best part of mankind and over chaos. Saraqael, one of the holy angels, who is set over the spirits, who sin in the spirit. Gabriel, one of the holy angels, who is over Paradise and the serpents and the Cherubim. Remiel, one of the holy angels, whom God set over those who rise."

the soul. In their new environment, surrounded by the subtleties of Greek thought and absorbing its philosophy, they slowly developed a system of Greco-Judaic philosophy, adapted and synthesized according to their own tradition and pattern of belief. It has been appropriately called the Alexandrian Jewish philosophy.

This involved a radically new method of interpretation of Scripture—the devastating allegorical system, which was brought to climax by Philo, who was the end product of the great intellectual center of Alexandria, and master of synthesis. He used Greek terminology to describe the accommodated beliefs and institutions of Jewry as to the origin, nature, and destiny of man. This also gives us the time relationship of the development.

5. ETERNAL-HELL CONCEPT A PAGAN INVENTION.—It should be added here that the aforementioned eschatological concept of an eternal Dualism—an eternal Hell coeval with and forever paralleling an eternal Paradise—is foreign to the original teachings of Judaism. Moreover, such a *final* Dualism presupposes a metaphysical Dualism of two eternal and incompatible principles at the *beginning*, which is likewise utterly foreign to pure Hebrew concepts.

A theology that derives everything from a single power, or principle—the omnipotent God alone—can only conceive of evil as an innovator, which could not possibly crystallize in an eternal Dualism. There is a necessary correspondence between the principle of absolute creation and the complete restoration of all things. Judaism cannot, therefore, rightly be accused of inventing and imposing on the world an eternal Hell. Such a Hell is of pagan, not of Old Testament, origin.

6. SUCCESSIVE EXILES LEAVE PERMANENT IMPRESS.—It is also to be remembered that these apocalyptic inter-Testament writings, often inconsistent and contradictory, were obviously produced under the impact and impress of the thinking of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, to whom

the Jews had been subject, in succession, for centuries during their several exiles—though they still believed, theoretically, that the Old Testament was the supreme standard of faith and truth.

In these centuries, therefore, between the Maccabees and the formation of the New Testament canon, the influence of the Maccabean Age began its spread across the pages of history with a strange commingling of Jewish and then Christian elements. Thus the *Sibylline Oracles* were begun by pagans, continued by Jews, and finished by Christians. And the Jewish *Apocalypse of Ezra* was later provided with a Christian introduction and close.

And it was during this same age of the Maccabees—when the Jewish faith and polity was again under heavy attack, and the two leading parties of the Pharisees and Sadducees were developing—that this strong current of belief took shape as to the universal Innate Immortality of the soul and the consequently Eternal Torment of the wicked. This “river of opinion,” as it has been appropriately called, was so broad and deep, and now so strong, that it carried a large section of the Hellenized Jewish populace along in its current. Thus we are brought down to the first century of the Christian (or “Common”) Era.

Alien Note Injected Into Inter-Testament Writings

As stated, following the close of the Old Testament canon, about 425 B.C., a series of Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal Jewish writings began to appear, some of them definitely bearing on the origin, nature, and destiny of man. These ranged in time between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100. Some were largely apocalyptic in tone and structure. The first three, and therefore the earliest (*Sirach*, *Tobit*, and the *Sibyllines*), maintained the historic Conditionalist positions of their forefathers.

But about 130 B.C. a distinctly alien note began to appear, beginning with *The Book of Jubilees* and *2 Maccabees*. Some, such as *The Wisdom of Solomon*, vacillated between the two positions. (The sequence, category, and timing of each and all will be apparent by referring to Tabular Chart D, on page 658.)

The next six treatises appeared in the early Christian Era—the *Ethiopian Enoch*, *Slavonic Enoch*, *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, and *2 Esdras* all continued to be Conditionalist, while two, *Judith* and *4 Maccabees*, set forth the Innate-Immortality postulate, with its corollary of the Eternal Torment of the wicked.

Then, following these apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings, there come two climactic and contrasting groups of writings of great significance. Both appear in the transition hour from the old to the new dispensations, at the dawn of the Christian Era. These are, first, the consistently Conditionalist Dead Sea scrolls, and, second, the militantly Immortal-Soulist

Chart D

TWO VIEWS OF LIFE AND DEATH IN JEWISH INTER-TESTAMENT WRITINGS

(Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Literature—c. 200 B.C. to A.D. 150)

I. CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY (Eternal Death of Wicked)			II. INNATE IMMORTALITY (Endless Torment of Wicked)	
Approximate Dating	B.C.		Approximate Dating	
1	190-170	Book of Tobit		
2	180	Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus		
3	140	(Jewish) Sibylline Oracles		
4			130-125	2 Maccabees
5			153-105	Book of Jubilees
6				
7				
8			48-40	Wisdom of Solomon
			A.D.	
9	150 B.C.-c. A.D. 60	Ethiopic Enoch*	10 B.C.-A.D. 1	Book of Judith
10	1-50	Slavonic Enoch	100 B.C.-A.D. 70	4 Maccabees
11	75-78	Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch		
12	90-100	2 Esdras		
(Other Determinative Writings)				
13	170 B.C.-A.D. 68	Dead Sea (Essene) Scrolls		
14			20 B.C.-A.D. 50	Philo
15			77-94	Josephus
	Conditionalist	Total 8	Innate	Total 7

* Recent investigators give a later date. See Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, pp. 148-150; Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 180.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INTER-TESTAMENT JEWISH WRITINGS

Two distinctly opposing views on the origin, nature, and destiny of man are found in the inter-Testament Jewish writings. And some oscillated between these opposing views (cf. *Wisdom of Solomon*). Three Conditionalist works (*Tobit*, *Sirach*, and *Sibyllines*), beginning about 190 B.C., preceded the first Innate-Immortality writings (*2 Maccabees* and *Jubilee*), which view did not appear prior to 150 B.C. And two Conditionalist Apocryphal writings (*Syriac Baruch* and *2 Esdras*) extend beyond the Innate group of five, in the right-hand column, between the two Conditionalist groups of three and four, respectively, ending with *2 Esdras*.

It is important to note that in addition to the Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings, the *Dead Sea (Essene) Scrolls* are preponderantly Conditionalist, and represent an impressive stand on this view, whereas the last two in the period covered (Philo and Josephus) are Immortal-Soulists. Thus the two opposing groups, about equally divided, close with the Innate-Immortality postulate of Philo predominant, and exerted a determining influence on the Alexandrian Christian group a little later.

writings of Philo Judaeus—the latter destined shortly to exert a profound influence upon three variant groups (Jews, pagans, and Christians). Thus these opposing groups, about equally divided, had drawn far apart—with Philo's aggressive position ascendant, and soon becoming a determining influence. This was especially true among the Alexandrian Neoplatonic Christian group a little later.

I. Pseudo-Sibyllines—"Mortal" Man's Role in Drama of the Ages

One of the first in the apocalyptic writings of the time that must be noted is the *Sibylline Oracles*. These "oracular utterances" were of Greek origin. They began in the second century B.C., though the parts here noted are dated in the early Christian Era, and exerted considerable influence. The Sibyllines are a composite, falling into three categories—pagan, Jewish, and Christian; though all apparently had their place of writing in Egypt. The latter two groups—called the *pseudo-Sibylline* writings—were composed in imitation of the antecedent heathen sibyls (Greek designation for a mysterious prophethess, or revealer of the secrets of the gods).

1. A REFLECTION OF ONE VIEW OF THE SOUL.—These writings are not here cited for any authority attached to them, or because of their known authorship, but as a reflection, or voice, of the time, setting forth one view of the soul and its destiny and expressing dim presentiments of the future as conceived by the writers. What we are here to survey is from the *Jewish* sibyls, dated about A.D. 80.

The pseudo-Sibyllines flourished in the first three centuries A.D., and passed with the downfall of pagan Rome. They were apparently a device used first by Jewish and then by Christian writers in the hope of catching the ear and thus winning the heathen to their respective faiths, by copying the Greek hexameter verse of the heathen sibyls.

This form of writing also afforded protection against

pagan retaliation, which protection was a highly important factor. By simulating the pagan sibyls and concealing their message in figure and symbol, the writers could the more safely utter their predictions that mighty eternal Rome was destined to perish—a forecast fraught with peril for the writer. So this Jewish sibyl was couched in the phrasings of a pagan prophetess.

2. PORTRAYED DRAMA OF THE JUDGMENT.—A history of the world was here attempted, and a prediction of mankind's future fate, both individual and corporate. It was an attempt to embrace all history in one grand theocratic sweep, with the proud kingdoms of the world of men to be destroyed in order to make way for the reign of the Messiah and the future kingdom of God and the righteous.

Its fundamental emphasis was on the terrors of the last times and the drama of the judgment—the dead of all ages summoned before the tribunal of God, their bodies raised by the power of God, the righteous to be purified and the wicked to be plunged into final ruin. The separation of good and evil is curiously portrayed as effected by passing through a river of fire, angels conveying the righteous to safety, and the wicked abandoned in the fire for destruction.

The coming judgment is therefore a "day of wrath," they declared, which will destroy the world by fire. But it will be preceded by darkness and distress of nations, the light even of the heavenly bodies failing. Then God will appear in the clouds to destroy the earth and *consume evil men*, as Messiah comes to assume the predicted kingdom.¹ These were the elements that made the Sibyllines conspicuous in the literature of the time. And in the second century an imperial decree forbade the reading of the Sibyllines, because they contained prophecies of the coming world kingdom of Messiah.

¹ R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 375. (Robert H. Charles [d. 1931], whose text we shall follow, was regarded as the great authority of his day in Jewish eschatology and apocalyptic matters. He was not only professor at Dublin and Oxford but also archdeacon of Westminster.)

II. Fateful Destiny of All Mankind Portrayed

1. MAN IS MORTAL; GOD IS IMMORTAL.—In this portrayal two contrasting terms and their connotations run persistently throughout this Jewish section of the *Sibylline Oracles*—that man, the creature, is indeed “mortal,” but God, the self-existent Creator is “immortal,” “eternal,” and “incorruptible.” In Fragment 1 the opening words are “O ye mortal men of flesh” (1:1). Then the terms “mortal flesh,” “mortals,” and “vain mortals” are repeated constantly, in contrast with the “eternal God” (1:1, 9, 11, 13, 25).²

The contrast is continued in Fragment 2, and Fragment 3 states that “any thing brought into being wholly perishes, God could not have been fashioned from the loins of a man” (3:1, 2).³ Mortal man is contrasted with the “incorruptible Creator, the Eternal.” And the thought is added that the wicked are at last to be burned with fire (3:12, 17, 44),⁴ while the blessed “inherit life, throughout the aeonian time, dwelling in the fertile garden of Paradise” (3:47, 48).⁵

Book 3 iterates, reiterates, and amplifies the fact that in contrast with the “Eternal Saviour” and “immortal king,” man, fashioned by God, is “mortal” (3:17, 35).⁶ But Belial “deceives mortals” (3:68). And the sibyl records that the “Mighty God” “threatened mortals when they made a tower” at Babylon (3:97-104), and as a result tongues were multiplied.

Thus “mortal men” were incited to “strife” (3:103), and “this is the beginning of war to all mortals” (3:154, 155).⁷ Thus the term “mortals” and the idea of mortality of man appears again and again (3:182, 195, 217, 259).⁸ It seems to be the continuing overtone. But the “Immortal God” (3:283)⁹ is presented in connection with the provision of the “good at the end” that awaits the righteous.

² *Ibid.*, p. 377.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 380, 381.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 382, 383.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

2. FATEFUL JUDGMENT DAY TRIES "MORTAL" MEN.—The fateful day of judgment comes to mortal man as a summons from the "Eternal God" (3:741-744).¹⁰ Then God will "burn with fire the race of stubborn men" (3:761). However, to the godly the Eternal will open "the portals of the blessed, and all joys, and everlasting sense and eternal gladness" (3:770, 771). These turbulent times will all come to pass "when the end of all things is coming on the earth" (3:797).¹¹ Thus the "mysteries of God" are proclaimed to "mortals" and "mortal men" (3:812, 823).¹²

3. RESURRECTED AFTER FIRE REDUCES TO ASHES.—Book 4 continues the strain, declaring that the mighty God cannot be measured with "mortal eyes, seeing He was not fashioned by mortal hand" (4:11).¹³ Then, turning to the world's prophetic outline, which forecasts destruction and conflagration for the earth (4:160, 161), the sibyl exclaims, "O ill-starred mortals" (4:162). Next the final cataclysm is portrayed—"The whole world shall hear a rumbling and a mighty roar" (4:175). Then shall God "burn the whole earth, and consume the whole race of men" (4:176). And "He shall burn everything out, and there shall be sooty dust" (4:178).

Then, when "everything shall have been reduced to dust and ashes," God will "quench the giant fire" and re-form man that has perished, and "shall raise up mortals once more as they were before" (4:179-182). The wicked will be in the "black recesses of hell," while the "godly shall dwell again on earth when God gives breath and life and grace to them" (4:186-189).¹⁴ That is the sibyls last-day outline, or eschatology.

Book 5 also speaks of "God, the Chief of all, the Immortal and Eternal," and "mortal men" (5:276, 277).¹⁵ The "end to mortal men" and the utter destruction of the ungodly are repeated (5:301, 302), with the observation that the dead bodies on earth are "more numerous than the sand" (5:305).¹⁶ "Fire shall rain on mortal men" (5:377).¹⁷ But the Father is "from

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 393.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

everlasting," the "Great Eternal God" (5:498, 500).¹⁸ His power and justice will prevail, and evil be punished.

4. FOUR WORLD POWERS AND ESCHATOLOGICAL END.—All this was part of the great prophetic sweep of the centuries leading to the grand climax of the ages. The sibyl, obviously patterned her "prophecy" of four world powers after the broad outline of the Biblical Daniel 2 and 7, which tell of these same four successive kingdoms. And the sibyl daringly names and describes them in sequence. First, the "Assyrians," or Babylonians, "rule over all mankind" (4:49). Then the stronger "Medes and Persians" ascend the throne of power (4:54, 62).¹⁹ Next the "Macedonians" overthrow the Persians and grasp the world "sceptre" (4:88).

And, finally, the great "Italian," or Roman, power from the "west," takes over and oppresses the earth (4:103, 104).²⁰ But, the sibyl boldly declares, God will at last destroy the nations of mortal man by a great "conflagration" (4:160, 161), then "raise up" mortal man again, from the moldering mounds of earth (4:181, 182).²¹ Even the overthrow of a lawless usurper (a sort of antichrist) is portrayed in connection with the destruction of Rome and the fiery judgments to come at the world's end (5:34, 177, 178).²²

Such is the curious but nevertheless pertinent witness of this section of the *pseudo-Sibylline* writings in this inter-Testament period on the contrast and conflict of "mortal man" with "Immortal God," intermingled with strange speculations and assertions. These latter extraneous elements are in marked contrast with the sound, reasonable, and consistent picture portrayed by the Old and the New Testament penmen.

Such are the persisting contrasts of mortal and immortal in the *Sibyllines*. It was one of the voices in the first century of the Christian Era. Varying views were thus held and proclaimed.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 397, 400.

III. Variant Positions Presented by Minor Writers

1. "TOBIT": GRAVE IS ETERNAL IN ANNIHILATION EFFECTS.—*Tobit*, another Apocryphal writing, included in the enlarged Alexandrian canon, probably emanated from Egypt. It is the story of Tobit, a pious Jew of the captivity of Nineveh. Probably originally written in Aramaic it is dated about 190-170 B.C.²³ Formerly regarded as historical, it has come to be considered merely folklore with a historical basis, but enriched with the fable of the grateful dead, and showing traces of Magian demonology.

Nevertheless, it exerted some influence. Since the book is a mixture of piety and superstition, its testimony is not decisive. But it is indicative of a trend. The writer desires to be released from off the earth and become "earth" again (3:6).²⁴ In death he sees release from distress. The grave is a place of "darkness" (4:10, 11).²⁵ According to Charles's summation, in his introduction, "The grave is external in its annihilating effects."²⁶

2. "SIRACH": NO REMEMBRANCE IN THE GRAVE.—Brief note must also be taken of the Apocryphal book of *Ecclesiasticus*, or *Sirach*, one of the Wisdom Writings. This was probably written, or compiled, about 200-175 B.C., by Jesus Ben-Sira, a Jerusalemite holding the Sadducean position and inclining toward rationalism. He did not believe in Innate Immortality, and set forth no hope of a resurrection. He shows that already in his day "two views concerning death exist among men."²⁷ He is here noted only because he is one of the variant voices on record at the time, heard just as the divergent views were beginning to be injected. According to Dr. Charles, the *Sirach* taught that "in death there is no remembrance of Thee,"²⁸ and that in death one is "resting" in the grave.

According to Ben-Sira, thanksgiving has perished from

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 193.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 212.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 268, 269.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 313, 314.

the lips of the dead, as "one that is not." Death is not, however, the end of all things. There is a future life. But there is no mention of endless punishment. Here are two key excerpts: "In Sheol there is no delight" (14:16);³⁰ and "thanksgiving perisheth from the dead as from one that is not" (17:28).³¹ Ben-Sira's fundamental belief regarding the hereafter was much like the teaching of the Psalms—"In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. 6:5). Thus he says:

"For what pleasure hath God in all that perish in *Hades*; in place of those who live and give Him praise? Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead as from one that is not, (but) he that liveth and is in health praiseth the Lord" (17:47, 28).³¹

Death is sometimes spoken of as a punishment. But, says Charles, "there is nowhere any mention of punishment after death."³² The sense in which he lives after death is by means of the wisdom he acquired in his lifetime—deathless, posthumous fame. Thus: "His understanding many do praise, and never shall his name be blotted out: his memory shall not cease, and his name shall live from generation to generation" (39:9).³³

So the writer says, "Weep gently for the dead, for he hath found rest" (22:11).³⁴

The Hebrew describes man's state in death: "Humble (thy) pride greatly, for the expectation of man is decay" (7:17).³⁵ And the Greek renders it, "For the punishment of the ungodly man is fire and the worm."³⁶ Such is another of the conflicting minor voices.

3. "JUDITH"—SUPPORTS ETERNAL-TORMENT CONCEPT.—On the other hand, the Apocryphal book of *Judith*, named after its heroine, was written by an avowedly Pharisaic Jew of Palestine in the latter part of the last century prior to the Christian Era.³⁷ It was put in the form of a historical episode

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 378.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 340; note 17 reads, "fire and the worm."

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 246, 247.

describing the defeat of the Assyrians by the Jews through the prowess of a woman. It was an assurance that deliverance will come. God will punish transgression in the day of judgment, at which time the wicked will be consigned to *Eternal Torment*.

Here is the solitary reference: "To put fire and worms in their flesh; and they shall weep and feel their pain forever" (16:17).³⁸

Thus, as the Christian Era approaches, distinctly variant voices strive for a hearing in the ranks of Jewry.

IV. Differing Books of Maccabees Exemplify Divergencies

The four *Books of the Maccabees* were named after the Jewish hero Judas Maccabaeus (d. 161 B.C.), leader of the Hebrew revolt against the Syrians for the purification of the Temple and the restoration of its worship. The first two books are included in the canon of the Greek and Latin churches, and in the Apocrypha of certain English Bibles. *1 Maccabees* traces the history of the Jews from the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes (175 B.C.) to the death of Simon Maccabaeus (135 B.C.).

2 Maccabees largely parallels, rather than follows, Book 1, Dr. Charles suggesting that it may even be the older. It describes the horrors of the Maccabean wars from the death of Syrian king Seleucus IV (176 B.C.) to the victory of Judas Maccabaeus over Nicanor (d. 161 B.C.). It is an epitome of the larger, original work by Jason of Cyrene.

4 Maccabees is a philosophical treatise addressed to the Jews on the supremacy of devout reason over the passions. For a time it was erroneously attributed to Josephus, but was obviously written by a Hellenistic Jew of Alexandria, later than Book 2 but before A.D. 70. Books 2 and 4 are commonly recognized as bearing on the immortality question we are tracing, as is apparent from the following recent authority:

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 267; note 17 adds, "i.e., without losing consciousness of their pain."

"The Books of the Maccabees contain important doctrinal teaching on immortality (2 Macc. 7. 9, 23, 37 and 4 Macc.), the value of human suffering as a means of expiation (2 Macc. 7. 39 f.) and prayers for the dead (2 Macc. 12. 43-5). This last passage has played an important part in the defence of the doctrine of Purgatory."³⁹

1. "2 MACCABEES"—INNATE IMMORTALITY WITH PRAYERS FOR DEAD.—That Hebrew views of the soul and its destiny had undergone little alteration until a century and a half prior to the Christian Era is attested by the earlier apocryphal writings. Then the divergencies begin, with *2 Maccabees* as a clear case in departure. This was written to encourage the Jews to hold fast the faith of their fathers and to provide an inspiring account of their religion and sanctuary.

The present form of the treatise is an abridgment of the original work, made about 125 B.C. by Jason of Cyrene, a Hellenistic Jew. *1 Maccabees* had been written by a Sadducee and friend of the Maccabean dynasty, but *2 Maccabees* was composed by an Alexandrian Pharisee, suspicious of the Maccabees, who sought to sustain Pharisaism as the only legitimate Jewish faith. It makes no reference to the coming Messiah.

2. BELIEVES BOTH IN IMMORTALITY AND IN RESURRECTION.—*2 Maccabees* repeatedly asserts belief in the survival of the soul upon the death of the body, as well as teaching that after death *only the righteous* rise up with their bodies in reunion with those near and dear (7:11, 22ff.; 14:46).⁴⁰ Thus we read, when they are raised up it is to "life everlasting" (7:10). Again, the Creator "in mercy will restore to you the breath of life" (7:23). So will they be received again (7:29).⁴¹

3. PRAYER TO AND SACRIFICES FOR THE DEAD COMMENDED.—But another distinct innovation is introduced. The writer of *2 Maccabees* contends that God does not irrevocably seal the eternal doom of men immediately at death, but that He

³⁹ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (hereafter abbreviated as *ODCC*), art., "Maccabees," p. 839.

⁴⁰ Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, pp. 141, 152.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

may be influenced by the prayers and sacrifices of the surviving friends of the departed dead (12:43-45). The practice must have been common, as it is commended. The Roman Church, it is to be noted, leans heavily on this precedent. In fact, the later popularity of *2 Maccabees* is due, in large part, to the support found in it by Roman Catholics for their practice of prayers for the dead (12:43-45) and for intercession of saints (15:11-16). This point is so vital that we quote the first passage:

"He [Judas Maccabaeus] then collected from them, man by man, the sum of two thousand drachmas of silver, which he forwarded to Jerusalem for a sin-offering. In this he acted quite rightly and properly, bearing in mind the resurrection—for if he had not expected the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and silly to pray for the dead—and having regard to the splendour of the gracious reward which is reserved for those who have fallen asleep in godliness—a holy and pious consideration! Hence he made propitiation for the dead, that they might be released from their sin" (12:43-45).⁴²

4. VICARIOUS SUFFERING EXPIATES GOD'S ANGER.—Two additional points should also be noted: (1) The *vicarious sufferings* of the righteous martyrs allegedly serve to expiate God's just anger, thus atoning for the sins of the rest of God's people, and staying His anger (7:33-38);⁴³ and (2), the *intercession of saints* (15:11-16),⁴⁴ as well as the interposition of angels ("five resplendent men from heaven") for the salvation of God's people (10:29).⁴⁵

5. HOPE OF "SEVEN BROTHERS" BASED ON RESURRECTION.—Chapter six tells of the Hellenization of the Jews. In chapter seven the moving story is told of the martyrdom of seven brothers and their mother, all in one day, for refusing to obey the demands of Antiochus Epiphanes, obedience to which would violate the commands of God. One by one these noble men were tortured and mutilated, but they refused to yield. One boldly declared that if slain the King of Heaven would "raise us up," and would "revive us to life everlasting" (7:9, 10). Their "hope divine" was that they should "be raised up

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 142.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 146.



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The Seven Sons of Solomona,
Together With Their
Mother, Were All Slaugh-
tered in One Day, Under
Antiochus Epiphanes in the
Terrible Desecration.

by God again" (7:14). One boldly declared to Antiochus, "Thou shalt have no resurrection to life" (7:15).

And the courageous mother assured her sons that the "Creator of the world," who had "fashioned" each, would in mercy "restore to you the breath of life" again (7:23).

The youngest son, the last to die, she admonished, "Show thyself worthy . . . , and accept thy death, that by God's mercy I may receive thee again together with thy brothers" (7:24, 30). He solemnly warned the king, "Thou hast not

yet escaped the judgment of the Almighty God who seeth all" (7:35, 36). In standing firm unto death he tells of "torment and plagues" to be visited upon transgressors (7:38).⁴⁶ Such was their heroic faith in the resurrection.

If ever in all Jewish literature one would expect to find a declaration of Eternal Torment for this tyrant, it would seem to be here. But there is no allusion to Gehenna. The strongest word is, "Thou shalt have no resurrection to life" (7:14),⁴⁷ which, as Dean Farrar notes, would "at the worst" seem to point to final extinction, or annihilation. And while the faithful receive "overflowing life," the sacrilegious, deserving Antiochus Epiphanes receives "just punishment" for his pride, but "not a syllable about endless torments" (7:36).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 142.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁴⁸ F. W. Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 192.

Innate Immortality Established by Last Century B.C.

I. *The Book of Jubilees*—Soul Survives; Resurrection Abandoned

We come next to the apocryphal *Book of Jubilees*, called "important" by Dr. Charles. It was widely read in some of the early Christian churches. It is important for us too because it furnishes, apparently, the earliest recorded instance in the apocryphal writings of the expected entrance for the souls of the righteous upon a "blessed immortality immediately after death."¹

It was called *Jubilees* because it divides Biblical history, from Creation onward, into "Jubilees," or periods of forty-nine years each—the heptadic system. It was also called "The Little Genesis," because it constitutes a compendium of Genesis. Its author was obviously a Palestinian Jew, because he gave minute descriptions of things Jewish, and probably he was a Pharisee. The majority of authorities places its date about 135 B.C.

Comprising a commentary on the canonical books of Genesis and Exodus, it advances the theory that the "sons of God," of Genesis 6, were angels who seduced the "daughters of men" (4:22; 5:1-4).² According to *The Book of Jubilees*, human depravity stems from this rather than from the fall of Adam, and occasioned the Deluge. Human freedom and

¹ Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

responsibility are emphasized. And demonology is also stressed, demons being the offspring of fallen angels (5:1-4; 7:27).³ The doctrine of retribution is likewise pressed, and final judgment both for the human and the superhuman worlds (5:10-14; 10:1-15).⁴

1. INNATE IMMORTALITY ALREADY FIRMLY ESTABLISHED.—

The Book of Jubilees thus reveals another facet of Jewish belief in the century before the Christian Era—that *the postulate of Innate Immortality was already firmly established on the part of some*. It proves that many Jews by now believed in the survival of the soul after the death of the body (23:31), and had abandoned “all hope of a resurrection of the body.”⁵ Nowhere is the resurrection mentioned in the treatise.

The *Jubilees* taught the existence of Satan (Mastêmâ), chief of the legions of evil spirits (10:8, 9)⁶ which have dominion over men. It shows that many Jews believed in the coming and kingdom of the Messiah, and the great day of judgment (31:18, 19, note; 23:11, 30).⁷ But in that coming kingdom “there shall be no Satan nor any evil destroyer; for all their days shall be days of blessing and healing” (23:27-29).⁸

2. BODY RESTS; SPIRIT LIVES ON INDEPENDENTLY.—As to

the nature and destiny of man, *Jubilees* taught that the “bones” rest while the “spirits” live on independently. So the life of the spirit, separated from the body, is portrayed. Here are the precise words in the *Jubilees*:

“And their bones shall rest in the earth, and their spirits shall have much joy, and they shall know that it is the Lord who executes judgment, and shows mercy to hundreds and thousands and to all that love Him” (23:31).⁹

Thus, according to Charles, outstanding British authority on the apocryphal writings, “This is the earliest attested instance of this expectation in the last two centuries B.C.”¹⁰ The new thesis had been put forth.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹ *Ibid.* Charles's note on verse 31 is: “The bodies rest, but the spirits rise.”

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 27, 28.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

II. 4 *Maccabees*—Presses Immortal-Soulism Beyond All Predecessors

4 *Maccabees*, likewise named after Judas Maccabaeus, was a philosophical treatise on the supremacy of reason over passion, as illustrated by the struggles of the Maccabees. It was evidently written around the beginning of the Christian Era by a Hellenistic Jew in order to steady the Jews, surrounded as they were by philosophical heathenism. They were to stand alone, isolated by character and blessing.

But the writer was himself profoundly influenced by Alexandrian concepts—that is, by Platonism and Neo-Pythagoreanism.¹¹ At first this book was attributed to Josephus, but that was disproved. Though it was neglected by the Jews, it was lauded by the Western Church.

1. MEN GO TO RESPECTIVE REWARDS AT DEATH.—At the time of the writing of 4 *Maccabees*, in addition to the two great Jewish sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, there was a third sect represented by the author. Dr. Charles observes that the writer was “saturated” with Greek philosophy, as attested by his systematic adoption of their terminology. The writer was a Pharisee of the same school of thought as Philo, contending that “at death men meet with the reward or punishment due for their deeds.”

In brief, the righteous dead are immediately “received into bliss.” (See 10:15; 13:17; 17:18; 18:23.) And the wicked suffer eternal torture. (See 9:8, 32; 10:11, 15; 12:19; 13:15; 18:5, 22.)¹² They are tormented in fire forever (9:9; 6:76). The faithful *rise* to endless bliss while the wicked *descend* to endless torment, varying in intensity. This treatise well illustrates the ascendant philosophy of this school of Jewish belief just before the time of Christ and the apostles.¹³ Dr. Charles’s explanation is worth quoting:

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 662.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 654.

"How the Alexandrian School came to adopt the doctrine of the immortality of the soul but not of the resurrection of the body is too large a subject to enter upon here, but it is usually attributed to their having come under the influence of the philosophy of Plato and the neo-Pythagoreans. That the author was saturated with Greek philosophy is proved by his systematic adoption of its terminology."¹⁴

Because of this fact *The Books of the Maccabees* (especially 2 and 4) are often cited by proponents of Immortal-Soulism, since they unequivocally teach Innate Immortality.¹⁵ And they are especially invoked by Roman Catholics because they also teach prayers for the dead and Purgatory. With the basic premise went these inseparable, supporting corollaries.

2. RIGHTEOUS IMMEDIATELY RECEIVED INTO HEAVEN.—The writer of 4 *Maccabees* contends that at death the righteous are immediately received into bliss. Here are the documented declarations: After death, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall receive us, and all our forefathers shall praise us" (13:17).¹⁶ According to this writer, the seven martyred sons of Solomona, referred to in 2 *Maccabees*, "now do both stand beside the throne of God and live the blessed age" (17:18).¹⁷ These same martyred seven sons "are gathered together unto the place of their ancestors, *having received pure and immortal souls from God*" (18:23).¹⁸ There is here, apparently, no mention of a resurrection of the body. This is, of course, in direct conflict with the position of 2 *Maccabees*.

3. WICKED PUNISHED WITH ETERNAL TORTURE.—The wicked endure torments without end. Thus: "But thou for our cruel murder shalt suffer at the hands of divine justice sufficient torment by fire for ever" (9:9).¹⁹ And, "Thou for thy impiety and thy cruelty shalt endure torments without end" (10:11), elsewhere referred to as "eternal doom" (10:15).²⁰ Again, "For which things the divine justice delivers thee

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 662. See also W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, *Synagogue Religion and Worship*, p. 224.

¹⁵ "Unto God they die not, as our patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, died not, but that they live unto God" ([7:19]; *ibid.*, p. 675).

¹⁶ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 679.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 683.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 685.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 676.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 677.

unto a more rapid and an eternal fire and torments which shall not leave hold on thee to all eternity" (12:12).²¹ And last, "For a great struggle and peril of the soul awaits in eternal torment those who transgress the ordinance of God" (13:15).²² Such is the 4 *Maccabees* testimony.

III. *The Wisdom of Solomon*—Strange Combination of Glaring Contradictions

Another pseudepigraph in the Apocrypha, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, presents a confusing picture because of certain glaring contradictions. The opening chapters are clearly Greek in thought and theology rather than Jewish. This section discusses the different destinies awaiting the righteous and the wicked—the righteous to be rewarded with blessed immortality, while the ungodly will certainly be punished. But the earlier individual immortality is later shaded with national immortality.

The dating is frequently placed, as by Charles, between 50 and 30 B.C. for the first part of the book and 30 B.C. to A.D. 10 for the second part.²³ As part of the Apocrypha it exerted considerable influence on Christian thought, for it was a rather brilliant production, esteemed because of the splendor of its diction.

The writer was obviously an Alexandrian Pharisee, fully acquainted with Greek literature and philosophy, and profoundly influenced thereby. He discounts the Epicurean position of some who held that after this life "none was ever known that returned from Hades" (2:1).²⁴ But glaring inconsistencies and contradictions appear in the treatise. For example, the writer says, "I myself also am mortal, like to all" (7:1);²⁵ yet the death of the righteous is asserted to be followed by immediate immortality.

Again, in death the righteous "shall be at rest" (4:7);²⁶

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 678.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 679.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 521.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 540.

or, "we shall be as though we had never been" (2:2).²⁷ And yet at the same time the righteous dead are allegedly keenly alive. But of that, more later. So in theology the writer (or writers) is boldly Alexandrian; or more accurately, he exhibits a conflicting blend of Pharisaic Judaism and Greek philosophy.

1. CURIOUS ADMIXTURE OF TRUTH AND ERROR.—*The Wisdom of Solomon* presents a strange mixture of truth and error. It distinctly declares that "immortality" belongs to the good, while "destruction," its opposite, is the destiny of the wicked. This seems the more surprising in the light of the preponderant Alexandrian emphasis of the book. Yet, despite the Greek Innate-Immortality aspect, it seeks to combine with it bodily resurrection and aspects of Conditionalism. Note these wholesome words:

"Court not death in the error of your life; neither draw upon yourselves destruction by the works of your hands: because God made not death; neither delighteth he when the living perish: for he created all things that they might have being; and the products of the world are healthsome, and there is no poison of destruction in them: nor hath Hades royal dominion upon earth; for righteousness is immortal, (but the gain of unrighteousness is death)" (1:12-15).²⁸

2. IMMORTALITY IS FOR THE RIGHTEOUS ONLY.—The Epicurean concept of pleasure in life and extinction at death is noted as seeking to disprove the fallacy of the contrary view. Yet *Wisdom* says:

"... God created man for incorruption, and made him an image of his own proper being; but by the envy of the devil death entered into the world, and they that belong to his realm experience it. But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them" (2:23-3:1).²⁹

The concept of restorationism is, however, to be found. Thus:

"In the eyes of fools they seemed to die; and their departure was accounted to be their hurt, and their going from us to be their ruin: but they are in peace. For though in the sight of men they be punished, their hope is full of immortality; and having borne a little chastening, they

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 536.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 538.

shall receive great good; because God tested them, and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace he proved them, and as a whole burnt offering he accepted them. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine forth" (3:2-7).³⁰

3. "TRANSLATION" OF SOME IS ALLUDED TO.—Allusion is made to the translation of some (like Enoch) who are "caught away," and "hastened . . . out" of the "wickedness of earth" (4:7-14).³¹

4. DESTRUCTION OF WICKED IS UTTER END.—The "destruction" of the wicked is repeatedly mentioned. For example:

"Because he shall dash them speechless to the ground, and shall shake them from the foundations, and they shall lie utterly waste, and be in anguish, and their memory shall perish" (4:19).³²

They are "utterly consumed" (5:13);³³ the "hope of the ungodly is like chaff carried off by the wind"; "like smoke which is scattered by the wind, and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day" (5:14).³⁴

5. IMMORTALITY IS FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OBEDIENCE.—In contrast he says of the righteous: "But the righteous live for ever, and in the Lord is their reward, and the care for them with the Most High" (5:15).³⁵

And the part played by obedience to God's law is this:

"To give heed to *her* [wisdom's] laws is the assurance of incorruption; and incorruption bringeth near unto God" (6:18, 19).³⁶

"For to know thee is perfect righteousness, yea, to know thy dominion is the root of immortality" (15:3).³⁷

It will be observed that the "immortality" here spoken of is equivalent to living forevermore, and is expressly confined to the righteous. That, of course, is the Conditionalist position. And the utter destruction of the wicked, as primarily noted, indicates their entire end—likewise Conditionalist.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 539.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 540, 541.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 541, 542. See also x. 3, 6 ("perished," "perishing"); 11:19 ("consume," "destroy"); 12:12, 14 ("destruction," "punished"), on pp. 551, 553, 555.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 542.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 543.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 545. A footnote (6:18, 19) reads, "The keeping of her laws is immortality; immortality bringeth near to God."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 559.

IV. Innate Immortality and Noxious Involvements

But that is not all. The opposite and conflicting side of the same treatise must be noted—the Greek Innate-Immortality postulate and its involvements. To grasp this is imperative in order to understand and evaluate the pseudo-Solomon's reasoning and his conclusions. Let us now follow "Solomon's" major reasoning—which was evidently written shortly before the birth of Philo.

It will also be well to note that at this time there were believed to be a million Jews in Egypt, half of them in Alexandria, and a great number tinctured with Hellenism (1:1, note).³⁸ This is the setting of the other side of the conflicting picture presented in *The Wisdom of Solomon*. Perhaps it reflects the hand of another writer or redactor.

1. UNABASHEDLY AVOWS INNATE IMMORTALITY.—Part I (chaps. 1-6) deals with eschatology and openly abandons the historical Jewish traditional view. As mentioned, it vividly portrays the different destinies awaiting the righteous and the ungodly. In Dr. Charles's detailed "Introduction" he is eight times constrained to stress the fact that the writer of *The Wisdom of Solomon* enunciates the doctrine of *entrance upon immortality immediately upon death*.

His several statements are: "The writer enunciates the doctrine of immortality immediately after death"; "a blessed immortality with God entered immediately upon death"; "the soul immediately after death receives its full reward, happiness or misery, life or death"; "immortality immediately after death—a purely Greek idea"; "after their death their souls are guarded by angels"; "the writer simply added the idea of the immortality of the soul immediately after death to one or other of the current forms of Jewish eschatology"; "the writer adopted a purely Greek view of immortality"; and "adopted

³⁸ F. W. Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 535.

the Greek idea of immortality.”³⁸ And scrutiny of the treatise justifies the multiple statements of Charles.

2. “WISDOM” THE SOURCE OF IMMORTALITY.—Part II (chap. 6:6 to chap. 11) is a panegyric on wisdom. The writer presents a remote, transcendent God with no immediate contact with the world. All relationships are by means of Wisdom—not a person, but the personification of this attribute of God. Wisdom is set forth as *omnipotent* (“all-powerful,” the instrument in the making of all things—7:22, 27; 8:5, 6); as *omniscient* (“knoweth all things”—8:11; 9:11).

Wisdom is portrayed as the Creator (as above, “artificer of all things”—7:22, 23; 8:5, 6). Moreover, “wisdom is IMMORTAL” (8:17, note), and those akin to her share her “immortality” (8:13, 17). “Through wisdom were they saved” (9:18), and it is Wisdom that “delivered out of troubles” (10:9).⁴⁰

3. THE RIGHTEOUS ONLY SEEM TO DIE.—The righteous do not actually experience death, they only seem to die (3:2).⁴¹ They are “in peace” (3:3). It is purely a spiritual death; it does not mean ultimate extinction. The wicked continue in a miserable condition in the next world. Such are all “in anguish” (4:19).⁴² But all punishment is remedial and reformative.

The first part of the writer’s solution to the sin problem is “the theory that suffering is meant to test the righteous and prove them worthy of immortality and communion with God,”⁴³ “as gold in the furnace, he proved them” (3:6). Though they be punished, “their hope is full of immortality” (3:4).⁴⁴ That, it is to be noted, is similar to Philo’s declaration:

“The wise man who appears to have departed from this mortal life lives in a life immortal.” (3:2, note).⁴⁵

The summarizing subhead following 4:6, in the Charles edition, reads, “The premature death of the righteous is fol-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 518, 529-531.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 546-551.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 539.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 530, 542.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 539.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

lowed by immortality." " But it continues, "The very memory of the ungodly shall perish." As to spiritual death, the writer of *Wisdom* says, "We also, as soon as we were born, ceased to be" (5:13), being "utterly consumed in our wickedness," "like smoke which is scattered by the wind and passeth away" (5:14).⁴⁷

4. ASSUMES PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL.—The writer of this "Wisdom" pseudepigraph assumes the existence of the soul before birth (8:20).⁴⁸ Thus he says, "I myself am mortal, like to all, and am sprung from one born of the earth" (7:1). His body was "in contrast to the soul which pre-existed" (8:2, note).⁴⁹ And he adds, "A good soul fell to my lot"; and "I came into a body undefiled" (8:19).⁵⁰

He expresses the thought that "the soul which was lent him shall again be demanded" (15:8), and refers to "one whose own spirit is borrowed" (15:16).⁵¹ This evidently involved some form of pre-existence as an inseparable part of his Innate-Immortality concept. There is the same depreciation of the body as in Platonism. He speaks of how "a corruptible body weigheth down the soul" and "the earthly frame lieth heavy" (9:15).⁵²

Such is the strange conflicting picture presented in the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*. And such were the inseparable premises lying back of his Innate-Immortality conclusions. This was the transition hour in Judaism. Variant voices struggled for utterance. But the trend was Platonic.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 540.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 542, 543.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 531, 549.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 549.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 560.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 550.

Majority Adhere to Historic Conditionalism

I. *Ethiopic Enoch*—Underworld Torments End in Annihilation

We now turn to certain stalwart Conditionalists who parallel and close the Jewish dispensation witness, counterbalancing the advocates of Immortal-Soulism just cited. The *Ethiopic Enoch*, or *1 Enoch* (not to be confused with several other Enochs), consists, according to Littmann,¹ of a series of layers, or sections, the oldest produced about 200 B.C. and the latest about 63 B.C. Some of it was consequently pre-Maccabean.

However, the bulk of it was evidently written between 144 and 120 B.C. by a Jew of northern Palestine, while other portions were seemingly produced by a Sadducee. It is a pseudepigraph, and greater "authority" is being sought for it by the putting of it into the "mouth" of the Biblical Enoch. In any event the *Ethiopic Enoch* is one of the more comprehensive of the Jewish apocalypses. Fuchs says:

"[It is] the most magnificent of all apocalypses, the 'apocalyptic Bible of the time of Jesus.' . . . It affords the most important religio-historical material for the study of the mystic tendency, among the Jews of the Maccabean time, which some pronounce to be already Essene."²

R. H. Charles gives a formidable list of more than fifty New Testament passages that coincide either in phraseology or in thought with passages in the *Ethiopic Enoch*—some of them strikingly similar.³ One excerpt was apparently quoted

¹ Enno Littmann, "Enoch, Books of," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, pp. 179-182.

² H. Fuchs, "Enoch, Book of," *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, p. 132.

³ Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, pp. 180, 181.

by Jude, in verses 14, 15 (see *Book of Enoch* 1:9).⁴ And *Enoch* not only exerted a definite influence on Judaism but also played a significant part in the formation of Christian Gnosticism. However, around A.D. 300 this treatise began to be discredited by the Christian Church. Nevertheless, it reflects clearly the general tendency of Jewish thinking in the immediate pre-Christian Era. The future judgment is portrayed and the times of final restitution, along with fallen angels and legions of darkness, the resurrection and retribution, and final rewards. Such was its eschatological outline.

1. SOMBER SCENES OF JUDGMENT DAY DEPICTED.—He deals with the approaching judgment of the wicked, with the "Righteous One" coming as judge (38:2). The sobering scenes of the future day of judgment of man and fallen angels are depicted:

"And the Lord of Spirits placed the Elect One on the throne of glory. And he shall judge all the works of the holy above in heaven, and in the balance shall their deeds be weighed" (61:8).⁵

The wicked He will "deliver" "to the angels for punishment, to execute vengeance on them." But the "righteous and elect shall be saved on that day," and "never thenceforward see the face of the sinners and unrighteous." Their "garments shall not grow old" nor their "glory pass away" (62:10-16).⁶ "The days of their life shall be unending, and the days of the holy without number" (68:3).⁷

The somber scenes of the great assize are presented, with the "books of the living" open (47:3). The "Most High" will "execute great judgement amongst sinners" (100:4),⁸ and fear and trembling will come upon them (102:1-3).⁹

2. RESURRECTION EXPRESSLY PORTRAYED.—On the question of death, resurrection, and the intermediate state, contradictory statements sometimes appear—just as would be expected in a book of composite authorship, with its parts written over an

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

extended period. Sometimes mention is made of a general resurrection, sometimes of a partial one. As to the "sleep" of the righteous, "Enoch" interestingly says, "And though the righteous sleep a long sleep, they have nought to fear" (100:5).¹⁰ Here is an illuminating excerpt:

"And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol also shall give back that which it has received, and hell shall give back that which it owes. For in those days the Elect One shall arise, and he shall choose the righteous and holy from among them: for the day has drawn nigh that they should be saved" (51:1, 2).¹¹

It has been noted that the first alleged use of the word "Sheol" "in its New Testament signification" in these apocalyptic writings appears here in *1 Enoch*.¹²

3. WICKED TO BE UTTERLY CONSUMED.—Various verses tell of coming utter destruction of the wicked, with "no trace" remaining:

"And I will give them over into the hands of Mine elect: as straw in the fire so shall they burn before the face of the holy: as lead in the water shall they sink before the face of the righteous, *and no trace of them shall any more be found*" (48:9).¹³

"Yet the sinners shall be destroyed before the face of the Lord of Spirits, and they shall be banished from off the face of His earth, and they shall perish for ever and ever" (53:2).¹⁴

On this point of utter destruction Dean F. W. Farrar, of Canterbury, observes pointedly:

"The book [of *Enoch*] explains its own threats to mean annihilation, which is the very antithesis of endless torment."¹⁵

"An everlasting judgment shall be executed, and blasphemers *shall be annihilated* everywhere (*Enoch* 92:16 [Archbishop Laurence])."¹⁶

Evil "kings and the mighty" will suffer a severer punishment—being cast into "burning fire" in a "deep valley," with great "chains" prepared for the "hosts of Azazel" (author of

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 217. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁵ Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 187. His footnote points out that "in accordance with Jewish idiom—'annihilation' is described as 'being destroyed, condemned, slain for ever.'"

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

sin), who are cast into the "abyss of complete condemnation" (54:1-5).¹⁷

4. **TORMENTS OF ACCURSED IN UNDERWORLD.**—On the other hand, a forerunner of Dante's *Divine Comedy* appears in the treatise from some other hand. "Enoch" is led by an angel through both heaven and the underworld. He sees the "prison of the angels" and the place of punishment of fallen angels (21:7-10). They are judged "till they are made an end of" (19:2). And "Enoch" gives a detailed description of the mountains of fire. He sees heaven's storehouse of rain, hail, and thunder.

During his wanderings he comes to Sheol. He sees hollow places, deep and dark and wide, for the "spirits of the souls of the dead," the "souls of the children of men" who should assemble there. He hears them make appeal to the courts of Heaven (22:2-6).¹⁸ Sheol, in this instance, is no longer a place where the dead are unconscious, and unaware of what is happening on earth.

Under the hand of this writer they are fully conscious, and raise their voices in clamor. Here the unrighteous suffer great pain, and there are scourgings for those "accursed forever" (22:9-12).¹⁹

Thus, while some passages (according to the Charles edition) accord with New Testament thought, there is on the other hand a radical departure from the former Old Testament teachings on death and the destiny of the soul hereafter. And the innovations unquestionably laid the groundwork for many of the pronounced departures that later crept into the thinking of the Christian Church. But we need to know how these departures came about, that we may understand the grave results.

We must press through the remaining writings that we may have the whole story before us.

¹⁷ Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 220.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

II. Slavonic Enoch—Eternal Heaven and Unending Hell for Immortal Souls

The opposite picture is portrayed in *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, called the *Slavonic Enoch* (or *2 Enoch*), which is preserved only in the Slavonic form. It is not a translation of the *Ethiopic Enoch*, for although the same subject is treated, it is a different pseudepigraph. Here "Enoch" is led through the ten heavens (chaps. 2 to 22)—God dwelling in the tenth²⁰—to learn the secrets of the universe, that he might instruct and teach the fear of the Lord.

According to Charles, the final editor of this little work was clearly a Hellenist Jew who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, fountainhead of the Immortal-Soul theory. The date is evidently early in the Christian Era, within the first fifty years.²¹

1. FIRST JEWISH PROPOUNDER OF "SIX-THOUSAND-YEAR" THEORY.—Here apparently for the first time in Jewish literature appears the equation of each day of Creation week for a thousand years of human history, with its final thousand years of rest.²² Thus it was both a history of the past and a forecast of the future—a theory which came to play an important role in both early and modern Chiliasm.

It was an attempt to compute the time of the end of the world,²³ and of the opening up of the gates of eternity when time shall be no more. God created the world out of nothing (24:2),²⁴ with the specifications of each day of Creation week (chaps. 25 to 30). Man, it is here recorded, was created on the sixth day of Creation week (30:8-18),²⁵ and the Fall is depicted, as well as the Flood (31:1-34:3). And the Second Coming is also expressly taught (32:1).²⁶

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 432-443.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 426-429.

²² This six-thousand-year concept for the duration of the world, was not, however, simply Jewish apocalyptic, but was traceable back to paganism. The Zoroastrians in Persia and the Etruscans in Italy believed that the human race was to live six thousand years. Some scholars find evidence of Persian influence in the Jewish apocalyptic and Talmudic writings on this point. Cf. William S. Fox, *Greek and Roman Mythology*, p. 289; J. A. MacCulloch, in Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 5, pp. 376, 381.

²³ Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 451.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 444.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 448-450.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

2. SOULS PREPARED FOR ETERNITY BEFORE WORLD'S FORMATION.—*The Slavonic Enoch* taught that all souls were "prepared to eternity, before the formation of the world," and thus before they took up their abode in material earthly forms (23:4, 5). And "places" are similarly prepared for them for all eternity:

"Many mansions [are] prepared for men, good for the good, and bad for the bad, without number many. Blessed are those who enter the good houses, for in the bad (*sc.* houses) there is no peace nor return (*sc.* from them)" (61:2, 3).²⁷

3. FREE WILL, DEATH, PUNISHMENT, AND REWARD.—Man was originally created good, and bestowed with free will, and thus had power to choose between good and evil. He became the master of his own destiny (30:15). Death came as a result of sin (30:16).²⁸ All will be judged, and punished or rewarded according to their works (40:12, 13; 46:3).²⁹ The righteous will escape punishment, and be gathered into eternal life (65:8).³⁰

4. RIGHTEOUS "LIVE ETERNALLY" IN PARADISE.—Paradise is placed in the third heaven, "between corruptibility and incorruptibility." In the midst of it stands the tree of life. There are two springs sending forth milk and honey and oil and wine (8:3-6).³¹ This is the "eternal inheritance" of the righteous (9:1),³² where the righteous "live eternally" (65:9), possess "eternal life" (65:10), and "escape the great judgment" (66:7).³³ It is a pleasing prospect.

5. "MERCILESS TORTURES" ARE "ETERNAL INHERITANCE" OF WICKED.—At the northern end of the third heaven is Hell, a place of cruel darkness, lighted only by sheets of "murky fire" (10:1-6).³⁴ Everywhere is fire, and strangely, everywhere is frost. In the "lowest hell" the wicked prisoners are "in pain," awaiting "limitless judgment" (40:12, 13).³⁵ Merciless torture is the eternal inheritance of the wicked. For such there is no

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 449, 450.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 455, 456, 458.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 435.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

return, and no repentance after death. Cruel and merciless angels apply fearful tortures to those condemned to live forever therein, because of their sins against God and man. The guardians of Hell are thus vividly described:

"I saw the guardians of the keys of hell standing over against the gates like great serpents, their faces like lamps that are gone out, their eyes like darkened flames, and their teeth naked down to their breasts" (42:1, col. B).³⁶

It is a forbidding picture, but such are the torrid teachings of this extra-Biblical Jewish apocalyptic, appearing just after the opening of the Christian Era. The Eternal Torment of the wicked postulate was thus being promulgated in the inter-Testament period.

III. *Syriac Baruch*—Conditionalist View; Righteous Sleep Till Resurrection

On the contrary, *The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, or *2 Baruch* for short, was a composite work, characterized by Dr. Charles as a "noble utterance. It was evidently produced by Jews of Pharisaic background, in the latter half of the first century of the Christian Era. It was consequently contemporary with the writing of earlier portions of the New Testament."³⁷ It is likewise a pseudepigraph, sent forth as if written by Baruch, Jeremiah's amanuensis. But its position is highly significant, definitely presenting as it does the Conditionalist view of immortality at that critical time.

The *Syriac 2 Baruch*—not to be confused with the later *3 Baruch*, *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*³⁸—is an apology and defense of Judaism, and affords an illuminating example of one of the paralleling schools of Jewish thought current at the time of the apostles. The book, originally written in Hebrew, was translated from the Greek into Syriac, and bears

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 527-541. It was written probably soon after A.D. 136.

striking similarity to 2 *Esdras*. Observe certain characteristic positions.

1. DEATH, SLEEP, AND RESURRECTION.—Dr. Charles calls particular attention to the fact that the writer of the *Syriac Apocalypse* adheres to the older Jewish view of death as a "sleep." Here is Baruch's statement:

"For there have been many years like those that are desolate from the days of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and of all those who are like them, who sleep in the earth" (21:24).³⁹

And the anticipated awakening, or resurrection, will take place, he says, only after the decreed number of persons to live on this earth is made up:

"Because when Adam sinned and death was decreed against those who should be born, then the multitude of those who should be born was numbered, and for that number a place was prepared where the living might dwell and the dead might be guarded. Before therefore the number aforesaid is fulfilled, the creature will not live again, . . . and Sheol will receive the dead" (23:4, 5).⁴⁰

And death, he holds, came through individually committed sin:

"For though Adam first sinned and brought untimely death upon all, yet of those who were born from him each one of them has prepared for his own soul torment to come, and again each one of them has chosen for himself glories to come" (54:15).⁴¹

2. ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEW OF THE LAST THINGS.—Baruch's eschatological portrayal is vivid, including of course the judgment (chap. 24). The signs of the end are enumerated (chaps. 25, 26).⁴² Woes will sweep over the world—commotion, wars, famines, earthquakes, terrors, the falling of fire, wickedness, and unchastity—all commingled (chap. 27).⁴³ Distress and destruction will be worldwide, and irremedial corruption will prevail. Then Messiah will come. But certain chiliastic excesses are also portrayed—every vine to have a thousand branches; every branch producing a thousand clusters; and every cluster

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 495.
⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 496.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 496, 497.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

a thousand grapes (chap. 29).⁴⁴ But it was by such fanciful portrayals that the whole concept of the millennium was brought into disrepute.

3. **RIGHTEOUS DEAD SLEEP UNTIL MESSIAH'S RETURN.**—When Messiah returns, "then all who have fallen asleep in hope of Him shall rise again." The righteous will all be gathered in a moment, and rejoice together, not grieving that one had to wait longer than the other for the full consummation. But the wicked, on the other hand, will grieve because the time of their torment and perdition has arrived (chap. 30).⁴⁵

So here in *The Syrian Baruch* we find the original Conditional Immortality concept portrayed and perpetuated by Baruch. Commenting on this, Dr. Charles adds authoritatively: "This conditional immortality of man appears also in 1 Enoch lxix.11, Wisdom i.13, 14, 2 Enoch xxx.16, 17, 4 Ezra iii.7."⁴⁶

It was thus one of the two concepts now current.

It is highly significant that Baruch was not alone in this view, though of course the parallel Immortal-Soulist views had now been definitely developed by others. So contemporary schools of opposite teaching were prevalent in Judaism at this time. Let us therefore survey Baruch with greater detail and documentation.

IV. Sets Forth the Conditionalist School of Immortality

1. **EPITOME OF BARUCH'S HOPE OF JUDAISM.**—As noted, 2 *Baruch* presents a picture of the hopes of Judaism in the second half of the first century A.D.—at the very time the Christian apostles were also writing. It sets forth original sin and free will (15:5-9; 19:12), with sin as a conscious breach of moral law, and human depravity beginning with Adam's sin. Physical declension and death follow (17:3; 19:8; 23:4).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 497, 498.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 498.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

"Otherwise," Charles comments, "man would have been immortal," that is, immortal sinners.

The tendency to evil became established in man (48:42ff.), with affliction, disease, and death following.⁴⁷ But the issues of right and wrong remain before man, and the power of choice likewise remains his (19:1, 3).⁴⁸ Then, at the appointed time, the Messiah will return and the righteous dead will rise to a blessed life (30:1). The righteous will thus receive their promised reward (59:2) in the glories to come (54:15), while the unrighteous are cast into the torment of fire (54:14; 55:7; 59:2, 10).⁴⁹

2. PRAYS FOR END OF MORTALITY AND CORRUPTION.—

Baruch prays that the time of human mortality and corruptibility may be ended:

"Bring to an end therefore henceforth mortality. And reprove accordingly the angel of death, and let Thy glory appear, and let the might of Thy beauty be known, and let Sheol be sealed so that from this time forward it may not receive the dead, and let the treasuries [chambers] of souls restore those which are enclosed in them" (21:23, 24).⁵⁰

3. COMING JUDGMENT AND MESSIAH'S ADVENT.—

Chapters twenty-four and twenty-five tell of the coming judgment at the "end of days," and certain precursors, such as "much tribulation," that would precede. Then chapter thirty opens with, "'And it shall come to pass after these things, when the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that He shall return in glory.'" ⁵¹ It is remarkable how often this note is sounded throughout this apocryphal literature. There was high expectancy, and the eschatological emphasis was pronounced.

4. RESURRECTION AND ASSEMBLAGE OF RIGHTEOUS DEAD.—

Next, the tremendous scenes of the resurrection are immediately portrayed:

"Then all who have fallen asleep in hope of Him shall rise again.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 479.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 494, 495.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 498.

And it shall come to pass at that time that the treasuries [chambers] will be opened in which is preserved the number of the souls of the righteous, and they shall come forth, and a multitude of souls shall be seen together in one assemblage of one thought, and the first shall rejoice and the last shall not be grieved. For they know that the time has come of which it is said, that it is the consummation of the times. But the souls of the wicked, when they behold all these things, shall then waste away the more. For they shall know that their torment has come and their perdition has arrived" (30:2-5).⁵²

5. THE DUST GIVES UP THE DEAD.—Turning to the destiny of the wicked and the great "consummation," and the measurement of the "times" and the "seasons," Baruch says:

"For corruption shall take those that belong to it, and life those that belong to it. And the dust shall be called, and there shall be said to it: "Give back that which is not thine, and raise up all that thou hast kept until this time"" (43:7, 8).⁵³

But Baruch, with assurance of "many eternal consolations" awaiting him, is instructed:

"For thou shalt depart from this place, and thou shalt pass from the regions which are now seen by thee, and thou shalt forget whatever is corruptible, and shalt not again recall those things which happen among mortals'" (43:2).⁵⁴

6. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.—Chapter fourteen alludes to the incorrigibly wicked, with "no mercy on those who depart to torment" (44:12). That will be their tragic "inheritance of the promised time." To the righteous "shall be given the world to come, but the dwelling of the rest who are many shall be in the fire" (44:13-15).⁵⁵

In his prayer Baruch refers to "the destruction that is to be" (48:7),⁵⁶ the multitude who from the time of Eve have turned to evil, the coming of the Judge, the weeping over the living rather than the dead, the multitude going to corruption, and the unnumbered host of "those whom the fire devours" (48:37-47).⁵⁷

7. BODY RAISED IMMORTAL AND INCORRUPTIBLE.—Then

⁵² *Ibid.*
⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 502.
⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 503.
⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 505.
⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 507.

the resurrection body is portrayed as *undying* (51:3), *incorruptible* (74:2), and *invisible* to mortal vision (51:8). This is applied to the redeemed who are to live in the renewed world. The resurrection reunites soul and body (21:23; 42:8). Thus:

“The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead, [which it now receives, in order to preserve them]. It shall make no change in their form, but as it has received, so shall it restore them. And as I [God] delivered them unto it, so shall it raise them” (50:2).⁵⁸

Then Baruch asks, “Why therefore do we again mourn for those who die? Or why do we weep for those who depart to Sheol?” (52:2). Lamentation is reserved for those upon whom “torment” and “destruction” are coming (51:3). Make ready the soul, he admonishes, for “the reward which is laid up for you” (52:7).⁵⁹

8. A “TERMINABLE RETRIBUTION” INDICATED.—In a sort of history of mankind, after the giving of the law, Baruch speaks of how—

“at that time the lamp of the eternal law shone on all those who sat in darkness, which announced to them that believe the promise of their reward, and to them that deny, the torment of fire which is reserved for them” (59:2, 3).⁶⁰

It should be added that, regarding the book of Baruch with its terms “perdition,” “torment,” and “fire,” Dean Farrar of Canterbury observes: “It therefore points to a terminable, not to an interminable, retribution.”⁶¹

Such is Baruch’s Conditionalist testimony.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 508. See note 50-51. (Brackets in original.)

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 513.

⁶¹ Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 191.

“2 Esdras” Maintains the Conditionalist View

I. 2 *Esdras*—Immortalization of Righteous and Destruction of Wicked

“Esdras” is both the Greek and Latin form of Ezra, *2 Esdras*¹ being originally called the “Ezra-Apocalypse.” There is common agreement that it is a composite, the product of a group of Jewish writers²—a pseudepigraph brought together and invested with the name “Ezra.” This compilation was evidently made around the close of the first century A.D., after Titus’ destruction of Jerusalem. Its importance in this survey is therefore obvious. Later it was translated into Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Armenian. It found entrance as an appendix into the Latin Vulgate, and from thence was retained in certain Protestant Bibles as part of the Apocrypha. (See Chart on pages 634, 635.)

In its present form *2 Esdras* is commonly dated between A.D. 120 and A.D. 150. It was extensively read, and exerted considerable influence. Even in modern times it is still read for edification in certain communions. It sought to impress its apocalyptic message upon certain hostile rabbinical circles, in order to secure a permanent place in orthodox Judaism. Jerome, it should be added, was the first to deny its canonicity.

¹ It is called “Second” because in the Vulgate it follows the canonical books of Ezra-Nehemiah, which are combined and styled “First Ezra.”

² Some think it to have been based on the Salathiel apocalypse (of chap. i. 1), of A.D. 100, to which were added the Eagle Vision, the Son of Man Vision, and the Ezra-Legend, from other apocalypses, and extracts from an old Ezra-apocalypse.

It is generally admitted that *2 Esdras* contains some interpolations by a later hand, as well as novel and fantastic elements, which facts account for certain inconsistencies and contradictions in the text. And sometimes an expression will appear in one translation that is not present in others. Hence an occasional conflicting expression cannot logically overthrow or neutralize its preponderant Conditionalist evidence.

1. HISTORY EXPLAINED IN LIGHT OF ORIGINAL SIN.—The treatise begins with the doctrine of original sin. If an evil heart is transmitted to all from Adam, then all history must be explained and justified in the light of this fact. The major episodes of history are therefore recounted—the wickedness that called forth the Flood, the speedy apostasy again, then another apostasy after the giving of the law, and yet another after the building of the Temple. But the cause of it all was the evil heart derived from Adam. This problem troubled Ezra. But the answer given was that the understanding of the doctrine of the evil heart was beyond man's capacity. Only God understands it all.

2. WORLD'S END, FINAL JUDGMENT, AND RESULTS.—Then the end of the world, the day of doom, and the final judgment are set forth, and in their light the mysteries of Adam's sin become clear. The signs that will precede the end, and the judgment itself, are described in Old Testament settings. And the resurrection and the judgment are presented in the phrasing of the *sleep of the dead*. That was the eschatological framework. Here it is in some fullness:

“And

the earth shall restore those that sleep in her,
and the dust those that are at rest therein,
[and the chambers shall restore those that were committed unto
them].

And the Most High shall be revealed upon the throne of judgement:
(and then cometh the End)
and compassion shall pass away,
(and pity be far off,)
and longsuffering withdrawn;

But judgement alone shall remain,
truth shall stand,
and faithfulness triumph.
And recompense shall follow,
and the reward be made manifest. . . .
And then shall the pit of torment appear,
and over against it the place of refreshment;
The furnace of Gehenna shall be made manifest,
and over against it the Paradise of delight.
And then shall the Most High say to the nations that have been
raised [from the dead]:
Look now and consider whom ye have denied, whom ye have not
served, whose commandments ye have despised.
Look, now, before [you]:
here delight and refreshment,
there fire and torments!
Thus shall he speak unto them in the Day of Judgement" (7:32-38).³

3. "MORTAL" WORLD SUCCEEDED BY "IMMORTAL" AGE.—In *2 Esdras* eschatological speculations are rife, and a strong contrast is maintained between the two ages—the present and the future. Dr. Charles sums it up significantly: "The corruptible world, and all that is mortal, will dissolve, and be succeeded by the incorruptible world and immortality." "And his findings are well attested.

The Lord has appointed the time of deliverance. The course and duration of the present world is predetermined, with the glorious better world to follow the catastrophic collapse of the present one. But sin has not yet reached its climax (4:26-31). Then the signs by which the fullness of time may be recognized are enumerated (4:32 to 5:16). When these portents of the latter days reach fulfillment, the present world will terminate and the world to come begin (6:1-10). The day of judgment will have come, announced by a trumpet (7:1-25). Now let us survey in some detail the remarkable witness of *2 Esdras*, for it is a remarkable and refreshing presentation.

³ Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 583. (Brackets in original.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 555.

II. Documented Evidence of Ezra's Conditionalist Position

1. "MORTAL MAN" IN A "CORRUPTIBLE WORLD."—2 *Esdras* takes the form of a dialogue, in which the speakers are Ezra and an angel. God's ways are defended by the angel, who is God's spokesman. The first questions concern the source of "sin and misery in the world," and the condemnation of men, and how affliction can be reconciled with divine justice (3:4-36). Ezra protests it, but it is justified on the ground that men are free moral agents and know their duty, but wickedly refuse to do it. The divine reply maintains that God's ways are inscrutable. Ezra had never "gone down into Hades," nor "ascended to Heaven," "nor entered Paradise" (4:8).⁵ "The human spirit can only hope to understand dimly and in part" (4:1-11).⁶ So Ezra submits. The angel answers for God:

"How then should thy vessel (note 10: "understanding") be able to comprehend the way of the Most High? For the way of the Most High has been formed without measure, how, then, should it be possible for a mortal in a corruptible world to understand the ways of the Incorruptible?" (4:11).⁷

2. "NEW AGE" AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.—Ezra is told of a new age about to dawn that will solve all difficulties (4:22-32). And he is assured that "the [present] age is hastening fast to its end" (4:26).⁸ In answer to his question, "When shall these things be?" the reply is "When the number of the righteous is complete." And reference is mysteriously made to "the souls of the righteous in their chambers" (note: or "habitations") (4:34-43), and to the underworld (*infernium*, or Sheol) (4:41),⁹ a general term for the abode of the wicked dead.

Then the "signs which precede the End" (4:51-5:13) are mentioned—world panic, hiding of truth, barrenness of faith, and increase of iniquity, as well as certain celestial signs (5:1-4). There is reference to the mystic, eschatological time periods of Daniel,¹⁰ which must first be fulfilled.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 565.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 564.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 565. (Italics supplied.)

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 566.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 567.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 569, note 4.

3. **RIGHTEOUS TO LIVE, WHILE UNGODLY PERISH.**—Ezra is told, as epitomized in the headings, that "the earth has grown old and its offspring degenerate" (5:50-55), and that "the end of the age shall come by the agency of God alone" (5:56-6:6).¹¹ And "numberless armies of angels" are mentioned (6:3). The discussion continues on the corruption of the present world, and the outcome of it all at the end of the age. Then the question is asked Ezra, "Why disquietest thou thyself that thou art corruptible? Why art thou moved because thou art mortal?" (7:15). And Ezra answers, "Thou hast ordained in thy law that the righteous shall inherit these things, but that the ungodly shall *perish*" (7:17).¹² And *perish* is emphasized again in verse 20, and many times in chapters seven and nine.

4. **GENERAL RESURRECTION AND FINAL JUDGMENT.**—Then the writer comes to the "end of the age" (7:26-44), the revelation of the Messiah, the general resurrection, and the final judgment, when "that which is corruptible shall perish" (7:31).¹³ *And the end of time is the beginning of Immortality* (7:43). The Messiah's immortal companions, Enoch and Elijah, "who have not tasted death" (6:26),¹⁴ will appear as evidence of the future life and its rewards.¹⁵

5. **"SLEEPERS" IN THE "DUST" CALLED FORTH.**—Next the discussion turns to the restoration, or resurrection, of those who "sleep" in the "dust," until brought forth to judgment.

"The earth shall restore those that sleep in her, and the dust those that rest therein, [and the chambers shall restore those that were committed unto them]. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the throne of judgement: (and then cometh the End)" (7:32, 33).¹⁶

6. **THE WICKED ARE DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION.**—"Recompense shall follow," and righteousness and iniquity be manifest. Then comes this contrast:

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 581.

¹³ This conception was likewise stressed in *The Book of Enoch*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 583. (Brackets in original.) (This is all patterned after the prophet Daniel's portrayals.)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 582.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

"And then shall the pit of torment appear, and over against it the place of refreshment; the furnace of Gehenna shall be made manifest, and over against it the Paradise of delight" (7:36).¹⁷

And Dr. S. D. F. Salmond notes that—

"the language of the later apocalyptic books is sometimes indeterminate, so that it is possible to interpret it as pointing now to annihilation, and again to a punishment limited in duration. *The Fourth Book of Esdras*, for example, says of the day of judgment that 'its duration shall be as it were a hebdomad of years' [7:30-(6):16], and describes the wicked as doomed to be destroyed [8:52-62]."¹⁸

7. WICKED, AS A "FLAME," ULTIMATELY "EXTINGUISHED."
—Ezra grieves because the number of the good is so small—so many condemned and so few saved (7:45-74). The reply is that gold is scarcer than silver, iron, lead, and clay (7:56, 57). Then comes the comparison to "vapour" and to "smoke," and "unto the flame." They are "fired, burn hotly, are extinguished" (7:61).¹⁹ Ezra's comment is that it were better not to be an accountable and condemned free moral agent, "because we perish and know it" (7:64). Then follows Ezra's lament over the sad condition and destiny of man. But the answer is that man is accountable to judgment, and will be punished because of his accountability (7:62-74).²⁰

But while Ezra still laments the "fewness of the saved" (7:45-61) and the "multitude of them that perish" (7:61),²¹ he inquires as to "the state of the soul after death and before judgement" (7:75-101), and—

"whether after death, even now when every one of us must give back his soul, we shall be kept in rest until those times come in which thou shalt renew the creation, or shall we suffer torture forthwith?" (7:75).²²

The answer given is that all souls return to God, and are assigned places *awaiting* the judgment day:

"When the decisive decree has gone forth from the Most High that the man should die, as the soul from the body departs that it may return to him who gave it, to adore the glory of the Most High" (7:78, 79).²³

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 365.

¹⁹ Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, pp. 585, 586.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 586.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 585. Cf. pp. 592 (8:1-3), 596 (8:41-44), 598 (8:55), 600 (9:16, 22).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 587.

²³ *Ibid.*

On the contrary, those who "have not kept the ways of the Most High, that have despised his law, and that hate those who fear God—such souls shall not enter into habitations, but shall wander about henceforth in torture, ever grieving and sad" (7:79, 80).²⁴

They contemplate "the torture laid up for themselves in the last days," how "the habitations of the other souls are guarded by angels in profound quietness," and how they must "pass over into torture" (7:85-87, 100, 101). Allusion is made to the righteous "when they shall be separated from this vessel of mortality [note: "corruptible vessel"]" (7:88),²⁵ "gathered together in their habitations" (7:101).²⁶ The decisions of the judgment are final, and as to the question of intercession for sinners, the answer is that there is "no intercession on the day of judgement" (7:102-115).²⁷ No man can assist another, nor cast his burden on another. Each must bear his own.

8. "TREASURES OF IMMORTALITY" MADE MANIFEST TO EZRA.—Still troubled over the fate of the wicked, Ezra prays to God who "dwestest eternally" (8:20-30).²⁸ But the divine reply (8:46-62) is that such is man's destiny, and that there should be no thought of the "fate of sinners," which is of *undetermined but limited duration*, but rather one should think of the "treasures of immortality" (8:54).²⁹ This is the assurance:

"For to you is opened Paradise, planted the Tree of life; the future Age prepared, plenteousness made ready; a City builded, a Rest appointed; . . . and Death is hidden, Hades fled away; Corruption forgotten, sorrows passed away; and in the end the treasures of immortality are made manifest" (8:52-54).³⁰

9. WICKED BROUGHT TO "DEATH BY TORMENT."—Ezra is admonished to "ask no more concerning the multitude of them that perish; for having received liberty they despised

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 588.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 588, 589.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 589.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 589, 590.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 594, 595.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 597, 598.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

the Most High; scorned his Law, and forsook his ways," treading the saints underfoot (8:55, 56). "The Most High willed not that men should come to destruction" (8:59). But they have "defiled the Name of him who made them, and have proved themselves ungrateful to him who prepared life for them" (8:60, 61).³¹

Still meditating on the signs of the end, and the last times, Ezra is assured:

"For all who failed to recognize me in their lifetime, although I dealt bountifully with them; and all who have defied my Law, while they yet had liberty, and, while place of repentance was still open to them, gave no heed but scorned (it); these must be brought to know after death by torment" (ix. 11, 12).³²

This "death by torment" phrase has often been put forth as evidence of the doctrine of eternal future punishment. But the case for Eternal Torment is not sustained, for wherever the words "perish" or "destruction" are used, they denote "bringing" or "coming to an end." Thus when Ezra tells of the ungodly perishing, it is almost immediately followed by the thought that there be many who perish *in this life* (7:17, 20). So whether it be punishment here or hereafter, the Lord "delivers to death and destruction."

10. WICKED PERISH BECAUSE OF DISOBEDIENCE.—So to Ezra was presented the "justification of the fewness of the saved," and that "there are more who perish than shall be saved, even as the flood is greater than a drop!" (9:16). All God's bounties were prepared in the "eternal ages" for the obedient, but because of corruption the wicked are "destroyed" (9:18-22).³³ Again and again there is the thought that the disobedient "perish" because of their willful disobedience to the will and abiding "law" of God (9:32-37).³⁴

11. EZRA'S SINGLE PROPHECY DEALS WITH ESCHATOLOGY.—In the Eagle Vision (10:60-12:35) prophetic symbols are presented, and the course of empire and "lordship over the

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 599.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 600.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 602.

earth" (12:23) is portrayed, in relation to it all. Its climax is "kept for the time when its time for dissolution shall approach" (12:21, 22).³⁵ So there is, as it were, "a lamp in a dark place, as a haven of safety for a ship in a storm" (12:42).³⁶

This is Ezra's only venture into prophecy, and he here seeks to link his Eagle Vision with the paralleling vision of the prophet Daniel of the four world powers (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome). Ezra's climactic Eagle parallels Daniel's symbolic fourth monster—the Roman Empire (Dan. 2; 7; and 8).³⁷ The vision leads up to the world's climax. Thus his prophetic portrayal is definitely eschatological in intent.

12. TIME'S LAST HOURS, AND MORTALITY.—In the final Ezra-Legend, Ezra, in discussing "the secrets of the times" and the "end of the season" (14:5), is again told that "the world has lost its youth," and the times are waxing old (14:10). Then Ezra is admonished, "Now do thou renounce the life that is corruptible, let go from thee the cares of mortality" (14:13, 14).³⁸

Ezra's last words (14:27-36) include the following conclusion.

"If ye, then, will rule over your own understanding and will discipline your heart, ye shall be preserved alive and after death obtain mercy. For after death shall the Judgement come, [when we shall once more live again:] and then shall the names of the righteous be made manifest, and the works of the godless declared" (14:34, 35).³⁹

"Ezra" was clearly a Conditionalist.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 613, 614.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 614.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 613.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 621.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 623. (Brackets in original.)

Chart E

PARALLELING PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN NEOPLATONIC SCHOOLS CENTER IN ALEXANDRIA

(*Pagan School Climaxes in Resurgence of Paganism, Expiring in A.D. 529; Christian Catechetical School Becomes Mighty Force, Giving Way to Developing Catholic Church*)

1. **Philo** (c. 20 B.C.-c. A.D. 47), precursor—emanation; pre-existence; incarnations
2. **Lucius Apuleius** (c. A.D. 126-c. 200) of Numidia—Orientalism; World-Soul postulate
3. **Numenius** (fl. A.D. 150-200) of Syria—incarnations punishment for former sins

Christian Catechetical School of Alexandria

- I. **Pantaenus** (d. A.D. 190)—Neoplatonic positions replace those of apostles and Apostolic Fathers
- II. **Clement** of Alexandria (d. A.D. 220)—switches to Immortal-Soulism, with restorative purgation of wicked
- III. **Origen** (d. A.D. 254), allegorizer—pre-existence of souls; successive transmigrations; spiritual resurrection; ultimate restoration of all
[Origenism condemned in A.D. 544, under Justinian, at a Council of Constantinople]
- IV. **Heracles**; Dionysius; Theognostus; Pierius; Didymus
4. **Ammonius Saccas** (c. A.D. 175-c. 242)—lays foundations of pagan Neoplatonism
5. **Plotinus** (c. A.D. 205-270) of Egypt—Orientalism; Emanation; Dualism; Mysticism; Reabsorption
6. **Porphyry** (c. A.D. 232-c. 304), Skeptic—holds to Universal-Soul; liberation from body
7. **Iamblichus** (c. A.D. 250-c. 333) of Syria—mythology; astrology; necromancy
8. **Julian** the Apostate (A.D. 332-363), emperor—suppresses Christianity; exalts paganism
9. **Proclus** (A.D. 412-485)—emanation; reabsorption; mystic union of soul with deity
10. A.D. 529—Justinian closes academy; confiscates property; forbids teaching of philosophy; philosophers exiled to Persia

ACCOUTERMENTS PASS, BUT MAIN PLATONIC TENET REMAINS

North Africa (particularly Alexandria and Carthage), gathering place for philosophers, Jews, Gnostics, and Christian apologists and teachers, was the rallying point for Neoplatonism, both pagan and Christian, the last great system of Greek philosophy. Its penetrations continued until the Christian Church was compassed by the doctrinal darkness of the Middle Ages.

As with the demise of *pagan* Neoplatonism under Justinian in A.D. 529, so in A.D. 544 Origen's Universal Restorationism was condemned in the Second Council of Constantinople, and Tertullian-Augustinianism prevailed, with its Universal Innate-Immortality postulate and Eternal-Torment corollary.

Thus, while the accouterments of Neoplatonism passed—with its emanation, pre-existence, reincarnation, and reabsorption—the basic premise of Platonism (the Innate Immortality of the soul) became a permanent plank in the creed of the dominant Catholic Church, with its paralleling postulate of the Eternal Torment of the wicked.

Neoplatonism's Development— Jewish, Pagan, and Christian

As mentioned, we are witnessing two simultaneous but contrasting developments: one, the progressive adoption of the Platonic philosophy of Immortal-Soulism by one group of inter-Testament Jewish writers; and two, the continuing fidelity of others to the Mosaic faith of their fathers—namely, Old Testament Conditionalism. It is a confused and confusing unfoldment, sad but actual, and destined in due time profoundly to affect a major section of the Christian Church.

That is because this segment of the church was influenced not only *directly* by this same Platonic philosophy but *indirectly* by Plato through this Alexandrian wing of the Jewish Church, particularly through Philo. So we are here tracing the development of a double tragedy.

I. Alexandria—Seat of Two Paralleling Schools

1. GREEK PHILOSOPHY TAKES ROOT IN ROMAN EMPIRE.—Rome was founded some seven hundred years before Christ. But for centuries the Romans were a fierce, barbarous people, taking little interest either in speculative philosophy or in religion. Not until the second century B.C. did philosophy begin to be studied at Rome, being then introduced by Grecian philosophers. At first there was strong opposition from Roman leaders.

But following Rome's military conquest of Greece the two nations began to commingle. And soon Grecian religion

and philosophy began to flourish at Rome. Though victorious in war, the conquerors began to adopt the philosophical opinions of the vanquished.

Before long every major Grecian school of philosophy had its devotees among the Romans—Platonists, Pythagoreans, Stoics, Epicureans, Pyrrhonics, and others. Some later schools openly denied the immortality of the soul. But Platonism, with its insistence on Innate Immortality, was embraced by others, such as Cicero (106-43 B.C.). He greatly admired Plato, and wrote much to establish the theory of Immortal-Soulism. In fact, he sought to do among the Romans what Plato had done for this doctrine among the Greeks. Nevertheless, even Cicero confessed that he felt assurance of the soul's immortality only when he was arguing the case—while in his hours of sober reflection he doubted it. Thus:

"I have read and re-read Plato's *Phaedo*, but, how it is, I know not, while I read I assent; when, however, I have put aside the book and have begun to cogitate for myself on the immortality of souls, all my assent slips away."¹

2. NEOPLATONIC SCHOOL RESULT OF ECLECTIC CHOICE.—

Then, about the beginning of the Christian Era, a unique school was started in Alexandria, Egypt, now of course, constituting part of the Roman Empire. It was an *eclectic*² school, significantly called the School of Neoplatonic Philosophy. Wearying of the endless disputes and bickerings between the different sects of philosophy and religion, certain pagan philosophers formulated a plan of gleaning from each school what was deemed best, and consonant with reason—rejecting the rest of the clashing. Thus the rivals joined forces, with Platonism as the determining factor in the selection.

This eclecticism, it should be added, was stimulated by the Roman lack of sympathy with subtle metaphysical niceties and distinctions. To the hardheaded Romans the disputes of

¹ Cicero, *Disputationes Tusculanae* 1:11, quoted in Petavel, *The Problem of Immortality*, p. 59.

² *Eclecticism*—the attempt to reach the highest probability by selection from already existing systems of philosophy.

the Greek philosophers were trifling and unseemly. So Neoplatonism built upon this new platform, with its deletions and refinements, but with *the immortality of the soul remaining one of its most conspicuous planks*.

It is to be borne in mind in this connection that the masses of the Greeks and Romans were still silent before the mystery of death, and the afterlife had no fixed place in their thoughts. The cold criticism of the philosophers, the skepticism of the poets, and the sneer of the satirists had cast a pall of gloom over the sorrowing. And the hypothetical hope of immortality was but the uncertain hope of the few, not the expectation of the masses.

3. ALEXANDRIA THE CENTER OF CONFLICTING CULTURES.—But let us probe a little deeper. The conquests of Alexander the Great, extending from the Mediterranean to the Indus, brought the Occidental and Oriental peoples, cultures, and civilizations closer together, opening new areas of philosophical and mystical lore. The monotheistic Hebrews, whose home lay between the two, yielded a distorted contribution through Philo. Then the succession of the Romans to the empire drew East and West even more closely together.

Alexandria became the new world center of philosophical and intellectual activity. Here the learning of Egypt continued to flourish. Here Greek polytheism, deifying nature, and Persian Dualism, with its principles of good and evil eternally struggling for mastery, came to the fore. And added to these, Indian mysticism, pantheism, emanation, reincarnation, and reabsorption were all interjected in varying degrees. And here, finally, the new Christian faith began to establish itself.

So in this cosmopolitan city with its conflicting conceptions of monism and dualism, monotheism and polytheism, magism and mysticism, and asceticism and Orientalism—but primarily Platonism—a common platform of postulates was now brought forth in the early centuries of the Christian Era. Thus, we repeat, this religious eclectic philosophy was developed under the name of Neoplatonism, which supplanted the

classical philosophies, the pagan division of which became intensely hostile toward Christianity. (See Pictorial Chart I, pages 524-527, for time sequence and relationship.)

Neoplatonism sought to become the representative and type of all religions, contesting with Christianity for the mind and conscience of man. It was a syncretism that sought to array all the influences and forces of paganism under its banners in a final attempt to resist and turn back the dread rival religion, Christianity, that was spreading alarmingly. Like the rising sun, it seemed destined to eclipse every lesser light.

4. PAGAN NEOPLATONISM BECOMES ANTI-CHRISTIAN.—As noted, pagan Neoplatonism was nearly coeval with the rise of Christianity, but ere long it developed strong anti-Christian and pantheistic attitudes. It centered first in Alexandria, then transferred to Rome under Plotinus. Neoplatonism grew out of the failure of the previous pagan philosophies to satisfy the longings of the human soul for certainty concerning God, and the origin, nature, and destiny of man and the universe. The assumptions of the older philosophies, including the original Platonism, had resulted in a reaction of disillusionment and skepticism. This led to a recasting of the old and the development of *Neoplatonism*.

This new development now crystallized at Alexandria. There Philo, as noted, at the very dawn of the Christian Era first sought to show the inner harmony between Plato and Moses, or Greek philosophy and the *Jewish religion*, just as Origen soon endeavored to do with *Christianity* and Platonic philosophy. It was an attempt to combine the conflicting systems into one synthesis. Philo was clearly one of the pioneers in this broad Neoplatonic movement—the last great stand of Greek philosophy.

And so it came to pass, as we shall shortly see, that the speculations of Plato, admittedly one of the world's greatest pagan philosophers, came to exert more influence on the religious opinions of compromising Christians than those of any

other philosopher. He became the unsurpassed mold of both Christian and pagan thought in this area of human destiny.

II. Pagan Neoplatonism—Greek Philosophy's Last Stand

In his penetrating analysis of the history of Greek philosophy, the noted professor, John W. Draper, astutely summarized the "four problems," or inquiries, of "Greek Philosophy" as: "1. Origin of the World; 2. Nature of the Soul; 3. Existence of God; 4. Criterion of Truth."³ And at the close of his able tracement of its development, as he looked back over the thousand years of its meanderings, he interestingly observed:

"Under the shadow of the Pyramids Greek philosophy was born; after many wanderings for a thousand years round the shores of the Mediterranean, it came back to its native place, and under the shadow of the Pyramids it died."⁴

The last stand we will now trace with rapid strokes.

In its declining days pagan philosophy became retrospective, falling back on the support of ancient mythicism and speculation, and borrowing heavily from Orientalism. Let us follow *pagan* Neoplatonism's rise, dominance, and fall.

I. PHILO: PRECURSOR, BUILDS UPON EMANATION THEORY. —Earliest precursor of Neoplatonism in point of time, as well as in importance, is PHILO JUDAEUS (c. 20 B.C.-c. A.D. 47). In laying the foundation for Neoplatonism he invoked the allegorizing method of interpreting the Old Testament, thereby wresting the Scriptures⁵ in an attempt to harmonize Moses' revealed theology with Plato's speculative philosophy. It was an acknowledged "blending of Platonism and Judaism," Deity and matter being regarded as the two first principles, existing from eternity. And he built his system upon the emanation concept. Draper specifically states, concerning his "mystical philosophy":

"It is very clear, therefore, that though Philo declined

³ John W. Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. 1, p. 207.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Oriental *pantheism*, he laid his foundation on the Oriental theory of *Emanation*."⁶

That was the starting point.⁷

2. LUCIUS: ASSERTS "WORLD-SOUL" PRINCIPLE.—This tendency to patronize Orientalism "occurs still more strongly" in LUCIUS APULEIUS (c. A.D. 126-c. 200), Numidian⁸ teacher of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies, and Latin representative of the developing tendency to blend the Oriental with the Occidental philosophy. He tried to "bridge the gulf between a transcendent God and matter" by assuming that there were numerous demons as "intermediaries."⁹

3. NUMENIUS: INCARNATIONS PUNISHMENTS FOR PREVIOUS-LIFE SINS.—NUMENIUS of Apamea (fl. A.D. 150-200), Neo-Pythagorean philosopher and forerunner of Neoplatonism, likewise had strong leanings toward the Oriental. He boldly declared what had then become a general belief, namely, that "*all Greek philosophy was originally brought from the East.*"¹⁰ He borrowed from "the magicians, Egyptians, Brahmans, and Jews."¹¹ That is significant. He cited the Stoics as holding that the World-Soul alone is eternal, and that all souls are to be blended and intermingled immediately after death.

He maintained that Plato constitutes the connecting link, actually proclaiming in Greek form the revealed teachings of Moses. Numenius went so far as to ask, "What is Moses talking but Attic Greek?" And he styled Plato the "Attic Moses." This was the crowning argument of Greek philosophy as a "philosophical *religion*," as it entered into mortal conflict with the rising power of Christianity.

Numenius himself syncretized Pythagorean, Egyptian, Persian, and Oriental dogmas. More especially, he made the

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 210. (Italics supplied.)

⁷ Thrasyllus of Mendes (d. A.D. 36) also had a contemporary part, by arranging the works of Plato and combining certain Neo-Pythagorean speculations with Platonism.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 210, 211.

⁹ Eduard Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 309.

¹⁰ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 211. (Italics supplied.)

¹¹ Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 309.

Gospels the subject of philosophical allegory, just as Philo had done with the *Pentateuch*.¹² So highly was Numenius esteemed that some regard him as the real founder of the Alexandrian School. And it is significant that Numenius held the soul to be immortal and immaterial, with its descent from its former incorporeal state implying moral delinquency in a previous life. So the basic emphasis continues.

4. AMMONIUS: LAYS FOUNDATIONS FOR NEOPLATONISM.— Usually regarded as the founder of the Alexandrian school of Neoplatonic philosophy, AMMONIUS SACCAS (c. A.D. 175-c. 242) was born of Christian parents in Alexandria and trained in the Christian faith. He lapsed into paganism, however, when his mind became absorbed in the study of heathen philosophy, and he helped in laying the foundations of pagan Neoplatonism. His fame was dwarfed by that of his famous pupil Plotinus. He is also said to have had Origen as one of his students, but he left no authentic writings.¹³

Pagan Neoplatonism, now assuming the aspect of a philosophical "religion," soon began to combat the rising power of Christianity, with Alexandria the scene of the contest. Here the pagan school was established that lasted for some three hundred years. It was identified with the expiring effort of decadent Greek philosophy.¹⁴ In this Ammonius played his part.

5. PLOTINUS: ORIENTALISM, DUALISM, EMANATION, RE-ABSORPTION.—We now come to the celebrated Egyptian Neoplatonic philosopher PLOTINUS (c. A.D. 205-270), the first to develop, systematize, and put into written form the now-crystallizing Neoplatonic positions. For eleven years he sat under the teachings of Ammonius, then traveled to India and Persia to acquaint himself with Eastern thought, studying under the Brahmans and the Magi. Finally he opened a philosophical school in Rome in 244, teaching there until his

¹² K. O. Müller, *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, vol. 3, p. 182.

¹³ *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, art., "Ammonius Saccas," p. 44.

¹⁴ Draper, *loc. cit.*

death. His writings were published posthumously—one dealing just with the soul.

Plotinus acquainted himself with every system of philosophy, and culled whatever supported his solution of the great problem of thought and existence. But to him Plato was the supreme authority and the starting point of his extended speculations. Plotinus' Neoplatonism was a religio-philosophical eclecticism. However, it was all markedly tinged with Orientalism, mysticism, and pantheism.

Ascetic in habits, Plotinus held his body in utter contempt, regarding it as a phantom and a clog to his soul. He considered it a "penitential mechanism for the soul." So ashamed was he of his body that he would never name his parents, nor remember his birthday, nor allow a portrait to be painted. These were all, he believed, alien to the soul—the real self. He found justification in Plato for the concept that "Thought is the Soul." So he disparaged the life of sense, and extolled the life of pure thought—transcending the world of matter.

He stressed union with God, and return to Deity. Denying the personality of God, he held Deity to be the first principle. The soul belongs to the supersensuous world, he said, and leads an eternal life without time. Further, the first soul sends forth the second from it, like a beam of light. This Plotinus called Nature.¹⁵

Under the Neoplatonic impulse this philosophical attitude was carried into an *intellectual mysticism*. It became a process of high abstraction—mere being, as in the East. God became the infinite background—mystic contemplation being the ultimate for man melting into oneness with the Absolute.

Plotinus based his Neoplatonism on a new theory of emanation. Finite existence was considered a progressive falling away from original perfection—the eternal one overflowing from its central being, losing itself in the surrounding darkness, through spirit, soul, and body—the body being the

¹⁵ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 211-213; Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 313-325.



Porphyry, Sophist and Skeptic,
Nevertheless Held to the Im-
mortal-Soul Concept.



Plotinus — Stressed World-Soul,
Emanation, Reabsorption, and
Dualism.

lowest of all. Thus individual souls separate from the World-Soul by a mystic process. Such were the lengths to which Plotinus went.

From his contact with Persian ideas a pronounced Dualism (found as noted in its most pronounced form in Persia) was also injected—and having a distinctly ascetic tinge. In the moral struggle there is division of the world into the two conflicting principles of good and evil. In Persia it was the contest between Ormuzd and Ahriman, or God and the devil, light and darkness. Evil was connected with the body and the lower appetites—that is, matter. The flesh is against the spirit. Salvation therefore lies in exterminating these desires and cultivating the pure life of the spirit, unsoiled by taint of body. At one point he even said, “Without the existence of evil the world would be less perfect.”¹⁰

Plotinus likewise stressed the idea of the “World-Soul,” creator of all material things, an emanation from the *Nous*—the soul being the image and product of the *Nous*. The souls

¹⁰ Quoted in Petavel, *The Problem of Immortality*, p. 433.

of men, in consequence of their descent into human bodies, have forgotten their divine origin, and have become estranged from the Good One. And the highest duty of man is, he held, to return into mystical union with the Deity.¹⁷ This return to original perfection must be accomplished by ridding ourselves of the restrictions of matter, rising above the finite and retracing our steps toward God.

The great goal of existence, he taught, is to withdraw the soul from external things and fasten it in contemplation upon God. This is reached when the soul, in ecstasy, loses all thought and desire in union with God, "is loosened from its material prison separated from individual consciousness," and becomes one with God, absorbed and cojoined, center with center.¹⁸ That, of course, is straight Orientalism.

Plotinus' ideas on the Trinity were based on a mystical theory of emanation—the second principle issuing by emanation from the first, and the third out of the second—"Thought arising from Reason, but Thought is the Soul." "Reason," he held, "is surrounded by Eternity, but the Soul is surrounded by Time." Such were the *new* concepts he added to Platonism.

We are to devote life, he urged, to intimate communion with God, *divesting ourselves of all personality*, and passing into the condition of ecstasy, in which the soul is loosed from its material prison and separated from individual consciousness and reabsorbed into the infinite intelligence whence it emanated. Thus in Plotinus the strain of Orientalism is predominant, together with specific Indian principles and practices—even "the process for passing into ecstasy by sitting long in an invariable posture, . . . or by observing for a long time an unusual or definite manner of breathing," familiar to Eastern devotees.¹⁹ This was the complex pattern of the new *pagan* Platonism. But, whether pagan or Alexandrian Christian, it involved the natural-immortality-of-the-soul thesis.

¹⁷ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, art., "Plotinus," pp. 1084, 1085.

¹⁸ Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 213, 214.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

6. PORPHYRY: SKEPTIC, YET HOLDING TO UNIVERSAL SOUL.—The opinions of Plotinus were strengthened and turned against Christianity by his celebrated pupil PORPHYRY, of Tyre (c. A.D. 232-c. 304). Of pagan parentage, he studied philosophy at Athens, becoming persuaded of the Neoplatonic principles by Plotinus. He was also devoted to Aristotle's postulates. And he too established a school at Rome. He was pronounced in his hostility against all religions, with special bitterness against Christianity. Strangely, he too was a pagan mystic, but denied immortality to the demons who allegedly rule the air. His emphasis likewise attempted to withdraw the soul from contact with the sensible world. And he similarly recommended Oriental silence in worship and pure thought.²⁰ This emphasis had now become more than a trend, it was a characteristic.

As to the soul, Porphyry held that the universal soul embraces the essence of the individual souls, yet without dividing itself among them. He did not extend the migration of souls to the bodies of animals. The purified soul looks forward to complete liberation from the body. However, he held that remembrance of the earthly state is extinguished. For purification he advocated asceticism and celibacy. He repudiated the prevailing ideas about the gods.²¹ His treatise against the Christians was ordered publicly burned by Theodosius II in A.D. 448.

7. IAMBlichUS: MYTHOLOGY, ASTROLOGY, NECROMANCY.—Under the highly speculative and superstitious IAMBlichUS, or Jamblicus (c. A.D. 250-c. 333), pupil of Porphyry and founder of Syrian Neoplatonism, the influences of the East were still more markedly felt. While Plato and Aristotle were still expounded, astrology, magical rites, and necromancy began to overshadow. Numerous Greek and Oriental pagan mythologies were introduced, including number symbolism. The concept of emanation was stressed. Iamblichus arranged the "various emanations in subordinated triads." The "lowest of all in

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 214, 215.

²¹ Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 323-325.

the cosmos" was "the world of sense."²² He also challenged the transmigration of human souls into the bodies of animals.

So, in the losing struggle against Christianity, the successors of Plotinus and other champions of paganism staged a resurgence of paganism. But this phase soon passed, for the future belonged to the Christian faith. Their pagan world was filled with a great hierarchy of souls—gods, demons, and men—"with mystical affinities and relationships between souls, which find expression in divination, astrology, and magical rites."²³

8. JULIAN: SUPPRESSES CHRISTIANITY, EXALTS PAGANISM.—

For the moment paganism seemed to have its chance, when the Roman emperor, JULIAN THE APOSTATE (A.D. 332-363), cousin of Constantine—brought up in the Christian faith but trained in the pagan philosophical school of the pagan Neoplatonists at Athens—tried to reverse the current of history. At Athens he was initiated into the old Eleusinian mysteries. Julian sought to repress Christianity and promote paganism by every means short of persecution. But his scheme came to nought at his death. Paganism had now lost the struggle against Christianity.

9. PROCLUS: MYSTIC UNION OF SOUL WITH DEITY.—

The last refuge of pagan Neoplatonism was the academy at Athens, in connection with PROCLUS (A.D. 412-485), just before its termination under Justinian. Proclus was a respected scholar, but ascetic and fervid, who had high regard for the ancient Orphic poems and Chaldean oracles. He now sought, ambitiously, to develop a complete theological system embracing all the theological and philosophical tenets of his predecessors, including the theory of emanation, embellished with mysticism.

It was based on a complicated triadic development. "The soul comprises three classes of part-souls—divine, daemonic and human,"²⁴ with demons connected with the gods. He too

²² *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, art., "Iamblichus," p. 674; Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 325-327.

²³ A. K. Rogers, *A Student's History of Philosophy*, pp. 183, 184.

²⁴ Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 331.

deals with the descent and future fortunes of the immortal soul. With him the final goal is likewise the elevation of the soul to mystic union with the Deity.

Proclus enjoyed the study of Plato, and speculated particularly on the manner in which reabsorption is to take place—whether one can pass at once into the primitive or whether a returning succession of states is required. Under him Neoplatonism reached its final pagan form.²⁵ But, unable to vie with Christianity, its mission had simply lapsed into an attempt to preserve the older traditions in their Oriental setting.

The last refuge of Neoplatonism was the academy at Athens. But in A.D. 529 it was closed by Emperor Justinian, the property confiscated, the teaching of pagan philosophy forbidden, and the few remaining philosophers driven into exile in Persia. The future belonged to Christianity.

III. Paralleling Christian Catechetical School

I. ALEXANDRIAN CENTER EXERTS POWERFUL INFLUENCE.—

And now, from the latter part of the second century onward, a *Christian* Catechetical (or theological) School flourished in Alexandria, addressing itself to the propagation of the Christian faith among the cultured classes. Its first known head, or teacher, was PANTAENUS.²⁶ But it was under Clement, and particularly under the presiding genius of Origen, that the Catechetical School rose to its greatest height, attracting not only Christians but large numbers of pagans and Gnostics²⁷ as well. It was here in this school that the first attempt was made to reduce the individual doctrines of Christianity to a single unified system—and this distinctly under the influence of Neoplatonic principles.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 332; Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 215, 216.

²⁶ *Pantaenus* (d. c. 190), probably of Sicily, and first-known head of the Alexandrian Christian Catechetical School, was converted from paganism to the Christian faith. He taught at Alexandria, where he greatly influenced his more celebrated disciple, Clement of Alexandria. According to Eusebius (*H.E.*, V.x2) he preached the gospel in India, and others say in Ethiopia.

²⁷ The *Gnostics* differed chiefly in that they later had little sympathy with the spirit of Christianity or with the belief in the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments. They paid no regard to the historical.

After Origen's enforced retirement to Caesarea in 231, the school came more directly under episcopal control, with Heracles, Dionysius, Theognostus, and Pierius, and successors, on to Didymus. (See Tabular Chart E, page 702.) It is to be remembered that this Catechetical School existed alongside the University (Museum) of Alexandria, and continued to attract students from distant parts.

2. CHARACTERIZED BY SPECULATION AND ALLEGORIZATION.

—As Alexandria had been the focal point of speculative philosophy, especially since the Christian apologists had earlier been pagan philosophers, it was but natural that Alexandrian Christianity should assume a definitely speculative form. And further, as the Alexandrian theologians had been Platonists (with admixtures of Pythagoreanism and Stoicism), it was not surprising that, though they rejected paganism as such, they should remain definitely *Neoplatonist*, seeking to explain Christianity according to the Platonic categories—much as Philo two centuries prior had attempted to explain Judaism—and likewise along allegorical lines, with conscious indebtedness to Philo,²⁸ as well as directly back to Plato.

3. SHADOWS DEEPEN INTO MIDNIGHT OF MIDDLE AGES.—

Clement and Origen, the philosophical theologians, were thus the chief architects and builders in this reconstruction. It was their genius that framed the arguments that removed the irreconcilable disagreements between Scripture and pagan philosophy—by the simple device of allegorizing away the intent of Holy Scripture when conflict was inevitable if taken literally. Safely entrenched behind this effective contrivance, they could resist the assaults of Scripture against the devious postulates of Neoplatonism.

As time went on the entire contour of the faith of the church came to be altered. And when the empire collapsed the church began to assume first the guidance and eventually the control of the state, welding the far-flung Christian groups

²⁸ A. H. Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, vol. 1, pp. 271, 272.

into a single Catholic body with a definitely formulated orthodox creed, with Innate Immortality as one of its central dogmas and all that sprang therefrom. And in it all, as the late A. K. Rogers, formerly of Butler College, significantly says:

“*Personal immortality, which in Greek philosophy had either been rejected outright or held with much hesitation, becomes a fundamental article of the Christian creed.*”²⁹

That is why we have traced it with such fullness through these crucial centuries.

So it was that Neoplatonism came to overshadow the light of the gospel hope of immortality through the resurrection, until the shadows deepened into the settled midnight of the Middle Ages. The Christian faith had been remodeled. And when the barbarian nations of Europe, into which Rome was divided, were converted in large numbers to the reconstructed Christian faith, it was a norm similar in many respects to their pre-Christian concepts.

Thus Platonism, having found its way into pagan Rome, in due course made its entry into the Roman *Church*. And as Doctor Salmond rightly observes: “The Platonic doctrine is first and last a doctrine of the persistence of the souls.”³⁰

That is its significance for us.

²⁹ Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

³⁰ Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 145.

Philo Judaeus Fuses Platonic Philosophy With Judaic Doctrine

Indulgence must again be asked for having to traverse another tedious section of this historical journey. But it is inescapable if we are to become aware of the grave departure that had now developed in Jewry—a digression that drew a major segment farther and farther away from the Mosaic faith of their forebears, as concerns the soul. It is admittedly a barren stretch, neither pleasant nor edifying to pass through. But it is an integral part of the fateful deviation now under way. And we must not lose sight of the fact that it is not only essential for the record but necessary in order to understand the emasculation of the faith of the chosen people, now far advanced.

I. Alexandria, Seat of Two Paralleling Schools

I. ON BORDERLINE OF OLD AND NEW.—PHILO JUDAEUS (*c.* 20 B.C.-*c.* A.D. 47), most distinguished of all Hellenic Jewish scholars and famous as a philosophical mystic, exegete, and author, was a native and lifelong resident of Alexandria. He stood on the borderline between the old and the new. His life completely spanned the thirty-three-year life of Jesus, and he was contemporaneous not only with the public ministry of Christ but with the early activities of the apostles, as well.

Philo came from a rich and influential priestly family, and according to Josephus, had a Pharisaic background. He received the highest Jewish and Greek education the times

afforded, was intimately acquainted and fascinated with Platonic philosophy, and quoted learnedly from Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. But Philo was an *Alexandrian Platonic Jew*, not a *Palestinian Zoroastrian Jew*. He exerted considerable influence in political life, and at thirty-nine headed a five-man embassy to plead before Emperor Caligula, at Rome, for the religious rights of the Jews.¹

2. BLENDS VARIOUS VIEWS INTO SINGLE SYSTEM.—In religious outlook Philo was an eclectic—gathering his teachings from various contemporary philosophical systems, as well as from basic Jewish sources, weaving them together into a single system. According to Philo-specialist Dr. H. A. Wolfson,² he was steeped in both the spirit and the teachings of Plato, but in modified and adapted form. In fact, he was called the “Jewish Plato.” His allegorical system of interpretation enabled him to “discover,” he believed, much of the Greek philosophy hidden in the Old Testament. And he maintained that the Old Testament in its deepest meaning and real significance is to be understood allegorically.

Philo forthrightly condemned idolatry, the gods and demigods of the nations, the deification of kings, and all animal worship—rams, goats, dogs, cats, birds, and fishes—as well as the deification of the dead. He likewise denounced mythology and the mysteries. But he used *Greek* terminology to describe the beliefs and institutions of *Judaism*,³ thereby leading to confusion and compromise. And, most significant of all, he employed the allegorical method of interpretation whereby “true knowledge” is extracted from the letter of the law, though often in direct conflict therewith.

3. PRE-EMINENT CHAMPION OF IMMORTAL-SOULISM.—This famous Alexandrian scholar became the most conspicuous cham-

¹ In searching into the life and teachings of Philo we have followed the lead of H. A. Wolfson, *Philo*, 2 vols.; James Drummond, *Philo Judaeus*, 2 vols.; E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*; I. H. Levinthal, *Judaism*; H. A. A. Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution to Religion*; R. H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*; and other authoritative books and periodical articles.

² Dr. HARRY A. WOLFSON, Austrian-born Jew, and professor in Hebrew literature and philosophy at Harvard University, is doubtless the greatest American authority on Philo.

³ H. A. Wolfson, *Philo*, vol. 1, pp. 88, 89.

pion of the immortality-of-the-soul postulate of his day, which he derived chiefly from Plato and expounded in Platonic terms. Flourishing at the beginning of the Christian (or "Common") Era, he contributed materially to the acceptance of the Innate-Immortality concept among both Jews and Christians, together with the scheme of eternal rewards and punishments that were inseparable.

Philo's twofold contribution as to the nature and destiny of man might be said to be his rejection of the resurrection of the body and his espousal of the natural immortality concept. One group of the oncoming fathers of the Christian Church such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, borrowed heavily from Philo, their predecessor and fellow townsman, and were strongly influenced by him. (For Philo's time placement and category listing, see Inter-Testament Tabular Chart D on page 658.)

II. Basic Features of Philo's Teaching Concerning Man

1. "REVELATION" THE DISTINGUISHING PRINCIPLE OF NEO-PLATONISM.—When the intellectual center of Hellenism was shifted from Athens to Alexandria, Jewry was established there also. The postulates of Hellenism were based solely upon intellectual investigation, research, and analysis. On the contrary, the tenets of Judaism were based upon divine revelation. When, therefore, two such intellectual forces as Hellenism and Judaism met—representing Grecian philosophy and the Jewish religion—there was bound to be an encounter that would inevitably result in new alignments.

This conflict between Hellenism and Judaism was basically a spiritual struggle, and eventuated in a definite change of thought and belief on the part of a large segment of Jewry. How to reconcile their fundamental differences was the question confronting Philo. *The figurative interpretation of revelation* provided the needed bridge. So the antagonisms were reconciled by the ingenious but compromising device of alle-



Philo Did More Than Any Other Jewish Leader of His Day in Setting Aside the Teachings of Holy Writ on the Nature and Destiny of the Soul.

gorizing the Scriptures to bring about essential accord with Platonic philosophy.

It was this that laid the foundation of Neoplatonism—a philosophy involving in its formative period the syncretism of Alexandrian-Jewish and Hellenistic-Platonic philosophy. It was distinguished from that of pure Platonic philosophy by *the adding of the principle of revelation* contained in the new philosophy, both in its early Jewish and later Christian forms. And the originator and pre-eminent representative of this new syncretism was Philo.

He held to the inspired character of the Old Testament and the truth of the Jewish religion. But, as stated, while so

doing he also introduced and sustained his philosophical concepts by allegorizing his Jewish beliefs. Thus the theology of Philo was clearly a blend of Platonism and Judaism.

2. PHILO'S CONCEPT OF GOD WAS A SYNTHESIS.—Philo held fast to the personality of God—incorporeal, invisible, eternal, self-existent, universal, omniscient, omnipotent, perfect, and self-determining. The world is His creation, and He is surrounded by ministering spirits. But, in accordance with the Platonic idea of transcendence and the Stoic concept of divine imminence, Philo regarded God as exalted above all contact with matter, which he held to be essentially evil. He sought to bridge this gap with creative and regulatory powers and provisions, combining Jewish angelology with the Stoic Logos concept and Platonic ideas—such as the view that God's breath is that which gives life.

Combining Neoplatonism, Neo-Pythagoreanism, and old Egyptian philosophy with Jewish concepts, Philo thus exalted the Supreme Being above all contact with the visible world. And he explained all passages of the Old Testament that seemed inconsistent with such exaltation as referring not to the Supreme Being but to a derived being, or Logos.

To Philo, God stands apart from the world in ineffable and ultimate perfection, connected with mundane affairs only by a series of lesser intelligible forms or powers—sometimes as in Platonic concepts, sometimes akin to Jewish angelology, and sometimes as an emanation from God's nature. This concept has its consummation in Philo's doctrine of the Logos—the mediator of God's revelation of Himself.

3. GREEK AND HEBREW THOUGHT BLENDED BY ALLEGORIZATION.—Philo sought to blend his honored Jewish inheritance with his newly acquired Hellenistic culture, so as to reconcile and retain the "treasures" of both Platonic philosophy and Jewish faith. He therefore sought to fuse the best of Greek philosophy with the leading concepts of the Old Testament, as well as current Rabbinitism. To this end he adapted and

adopted Greek philosophical thought. Most conspicuously he accepted, in accommodated form, the Platonic concept of relationship between God, the world, and man. As mentioned, he bridged the gulf with his Logos philosophy and accomplished the synthesis by his allegorical method of interpretation.

Under this scheme all Scripture became figurative and symbolic. In this way a passage could mean almost anything, according to the fancy of the interpreter. Thus allegorization became the universal solvent for every perplexity and cared for everything opposed to his new philosophical concepts. He still believed the law to be the way to goodness, and faith in Jehovah the entrance to eternal life—but all in accommodated form and readjusted setting and phrasing. He considered that in Babylon and Jerusalem the Jews were largely worshiping the past; in Alexandria they faced the future.

Philo's was a systematic attempt to show the *inner harmony* between Plato and Moses; that is, between Jewish religious thought and Greek philosophy. In discovering this "higher sense" of Scripture, Philo believed he had penetrated the outer shell to get the inner kernel of what he conceived to be fundamental philosophic truth. He even declared that those who held to the literal interpretation of Scripture were unworthy and superstitious. The celebrated German Hellenist professor of the University of Göttingen, Karl Otto Müller, long ago stated the facts succinctly:

"The object of Philo . . . is to harmonize the philosophy of religion, which he had derived from a study of Plato, Aristotle, and other eminent heathen writers, with the letter of the books attributed to Moses. And he effects this reconciliation by an unlimited use of allegory."⁴

4. STRANGE CONFLICTING CONCEPTS OF LOGOS.—In Philo's Logos doctrine, as in the countless *aeons* of the later Christian Gnostics,⁵ we see attempts to mediate between the Supreme God and those aspects of the material world that were con-

⁴ Müller, *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, vol. 3, p. 175.

⁵ See p. 854 ff.

sidered unworthy of contact with Him. Philo's Logos was the highest of the divine forces, the soul of the world, the interpreter and revealer of God. His doctrine of the Logos combined Jewish, Platonic, and Stoic concepts.

His Logos was the vicegerent of God, the mediator between the Eternal, the material, and the ephemeral. It embodied the Platonic idea of good, the Stoic World-Soul, and the Jewish Shekinah and eternal High Priest. It was at once the Angel of the Lord, Eternal Wisdom, the Mind of God, the Shadow of God, the First-born, Captain, Supplicator—but *not* a person, as such. Its involvements are confusing and difficult to grasp, but they are essential to his view.

And Philo's Logos is baffling because he employs the term in so many different senses—as a divine faculty of thought; as thinking and creative activity; as the result of thinking; the ideal world itself; and the active, divine principle, potency, or agency in the visible world. His very obscurity and ambiguity created endless speculation.⁶

Just as Philo equated Logos with the mind in the intelligible world, so he came to use it as the equivalent of the mind that is in man. Moreover, in Plato, whom Philo followed, Logos is used as an equivalent of the "immortal soul" (*Timaeus* 46d, 69d-e), the "supreme form of soul within us" (*Timaeus* 90a), and the "rational" soul part of us (*Republic* iv. 439d). So the Logos within is part of the pre-existent Logos—thus "the mind with and the mind above us" (*Heres* 236).⁷ Such was Philo's subtle and conflicting concept of the Logos. Now we come to the soul question.

5. FLASH PICTURES OF PHILO'S IMMORTAL-SOULISM.—We now note in general terms⁸ the highest points in Philo's teach-

⁶ Wolfson, in the index to his two-volume *Philo*, lists under Logos the following divisions, among others: Logos is "the mind of God identical with His essence"—also the "created thinking mind . . . the totality of ideas . . . or the totality of powers"—"immanent in the world"—the "instrument of divine providence." Logos is also described as "angel," "archangel," "bond of all existence of the universe," "eternal," "incorruptible," the "first-born son of God," "image of God," "a second God," "second to God," "shadow of God," "mediator," "harmonizer of the opposites," "source of the powers," "wisdom," and even Messiah. All this and more (vol. 2, pp. 518, 519).

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 393.

⁸ We shall seek to hold to as simple a form as possible Philo's complex, involved, and

ing, in order to get an over-all view of his concepts in the aggregate. The documented particulars will follow in Section III.

Man, according to Philo, has both an irrational (or animal) soul and a rational soul. The first is had in common with all living creatures; the second is not possessed by animals. The multitude of pre-existent, unbodied souls in the heavens include the angels. But rational souls descend from their eternal dwelling place and enter human bodies that are under the dominance of the irrational souls. An inevitable battle of the two souls ensues, man's free will deciding the outcome for eternity. And Philo defines immortality as eternal persistence, or existence.

Philo held that the breath of life is nothing less than the breath of God, and that the rational soul of man is uncreated. Deity and matter, he taught, are existent from all eternity. Thus he believed that while man's body, formed from the ground, is mortal, his uncreated rational soul is immortal. Virtue is the tree of immortal life. And as salt—symbol of the perpetuity of all things—is a preservative, so is the soul as relates to man.

But sin changed a happy and immortal life into a wretched and mortal one for the body. The death threatened was two-fold—of the man, and of the soul. The death of man, he states, is the separation of the soul from the body; and the death of the soul is its seduction by evil and corruption. To die is actually to live—in a doomed relationship. But the original Genesis episode of the Garden of Eden was an allegory, according to Philo.

The ethereal heavens are the fatherland of all the rational souls. And upon the death of the body the rational soul returns to the realm of the unbodied, among the stars, which also are or have souls. As to the punishment of the wicked, Philo is sometimes hazy and sometimes contradictory. But man's free will and personal choice justifies any due punishment.

According to Philo, there is (1) no formal general judg-

wearisome speculations that wrought such confusion, first among his own people and later among the Christians. Only by grasping just what Philo said and did can we see how, why, and when a large segment of the church went astray on the origin, nature, and destiny of man.

ment, (2) no resurrection of the body, but (3) everlasting punishment of the wicked. Such are the three summarizing conclusions concerning Philo, according to R. H. Charles.*

To Philo the body is the source of evil—the corpse, the coffin, the tomb of the soul. But, as noted, the unbodied soul does not die. It returns to the heavens, among the stars, whence it came. It is inextinguishable and deathless. The ladder of Jacob's dream, reaching from earth to Heaven, is the airway extending from earth to Heaven for these immortal souls—some of whom descended to earth to dwell in mortal bodies. Such a concept is, of course, definite pre-existence of a sort.

Philo believed in appointed, contrasting localities ("above" and "below") as the abode of the disembodied spirits of good and wicked men. The good dwell in the heavenly regions; the bad are banished to the nethermost part of Hades, with the incurably evil to Tartarus. Philo is at times contradictory in this area, but he clearly indicates that death is not the end of punishment—it is only the beginning.

6. PHILO'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THE GREAT DEPARTURE.—Philo's bold but subtle allegorical expositions were impressed not only upon his own age but upon succeeding centuries. His influence upon the Alexandrian Christian school of theology was profound. Clement of Alexandria, and particularly Origen, as well as other Latin Fathers, cited him freely and approvingly. And his allegorical principle of interpretation of Scripture soon became an accepted form of Biblical exegesis in a large segment of the Christian Church. Philo did for Jewry what Origen did later for Christianity.

Philo's actual perversion of Bible truth through this allegorical method is sensed only as one sees how he cast away the true witness of the Inspired Word by vitiating its true meaning through adoption of the philosophical vagaries of Plato, not only in accommodated form but in the actual superseding of the verities of Holy Scripture. Despite his

* Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 314.

brilliance, his learning, and his tremendous influence, Philo unquestionably did more than any other single individual of the Hebrew race to set aside the original teachings of Holy Writ on the origin, nature, and destiny of man. One can only add, fearful will be his responsibility.

But only as we get back to the premises upon which Philo postulated his conclusions are we in a position to evaluate the soundness—or the unscripturalness—of his conclusions. Only as we examine his foundations are we able to judge the trustworthiness of the superstructure he built thereupon. And this we must now do because of the tremendous influence Philo exerted, first upon his own people and then upon the beliefs of a large segment of the early Christian Church. And even beyond these his influence was felt upon the teachings of Islam.¹⁰

III. Scope and Significance of Philo's Innovation

1. CONTRIVES "AGREEMENT" OF BIBLICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL "TRUTH."—The allegorical method, developed into a system by Philo, was the interpretation of a text in terms of another concept, at the same time discarding the literal, historical element. Historical narratives were thus neutralized as merely parabolic or figurative. But this device antedated Philo. In Jewish tradition the Jew had not considered himself bound to take Scripture literally—free interpretation being followed in the Oral Law.

This was accentuated when Judaism came in contact with Greek philosophy and was strengthened by the translation of the Septuagint. And now this principle of free, unfettered interpretation was developed by Philo into an actual philosophical system of allegorical interpretation that brought him to positions startlingly similar to many of Plato's postulates, which he followed.

¹⁰ Wolfson, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 159.

There was this distinct difference however: As already noted, Greek philosophers, like Plato, did *not* regard their writings as inspired revelations. They considered them more as anticipations of truth. Philo, on the other hand, regarded Scripture as an *inspired revelation*—as knowledge and truth revealed by God. But, he reasoned, the *truth* of inspiration must be in agreement with the *truth* of philosophy and reason, for truth is truth wherever found. And the fact that the Greeks had discovered by reason what the Jews had derived by revelation, showed that it must have been a gift from God.

Therefore, he concluded, there must be underlying agreement between the two—if only it could be discovered. And that basic accord was secured by Philo through the deliberate allegorization of Scripture. Anything contrary to reason was deftly explained away under this effective procedure.

2. STRIKES AT ORIGIN AND DESTINY OF MAN.—On the existence and unity of God, the creation and unity of the world, and the revelation and abiding character of the law there was no problem. The subordination of philosophy to Scripture here was the subjection of reason to faith. But from there on subtle but grave departures began to obtrude. Philo assumed that Scripture has a twofold meaning, external and internal—(1) the literal or seeming, and (2) the underlying or real, the allegorical meaning, perceived by the initiated, being its true intent. This latter artifice Philo followed without reserve. It was his chosen method for reconciling the outwardly variant positions.

The result was a Neoplatonic and Neo-Pythagorean concept of Creation. The historicity of the Genesis story was thereby dismissed as a “myth,” “mythical nonsense,” and “folly.”¹¹ In this way Philo took the terms of Scripture, voided their established meaning, and gave them a philosophical turn. Thus he struck a body blow at the divine and only authoritative revelation of the origin, nature, and destiny of man.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

3. GENESIS NARRATIVE OF CREATION VITIATED.—As just noted, this stroke was directed particularly at the inspired record of the origin and destiny of man. Everything—names, numbers, events, sequence, historical narration—was all subjected to relentless allegorization. The creation of the world in six days, the creation of the lower animals, the bringing into existence of Adam, the formation of Eve, the Garden of Eden, the tree of life, the four rivers, the talking serpent, the temptation and the Fall, the expulsion from Eden, the garments of skin—all came under the devastating sweep of allegorization, as being “greatly at variance with truth.”¹²

Through the allegorical method the “true knowledge” was extracted from the “letter” of the account. The result was revolutionary, as Philo plays upon the two accounts of the creation of man (of Gen. 1:27 and 2:7), setting one against the other.

While this is a grave indictment, it is fully borne out by the facts. The amount of Hellenistic cosmogony and metaphysics that Philo reads out of (or rather into) the first three chapters of Genesis is utterly amazing. “Days,” he says, do not represent time, which (following Plato) came only with the movement of heavenly bodies in space. The number of days is merely “ideal,” not a restricted space of time. Actually, Philo held that all things came into existence simultaneously. “It is quite foolish to think that the world was created in six days or in a space of time at all.’”

That obliterated the days of Creation week.

The elements were, he held, eternally existent. The “six” days simply meant creation or formation according to a plan, a pattern.¹³ The numerological significance of “one” to “seven” is played up. Man was made in the image of God, resembling God, and aspiring to association with God. But as in Plato’s *Timaeus* (69c), man was not made by God alone, or directly, but by assistants. “Let us make man” (Gen. 1:26) is cited as

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

proof." So, following Plato again, God was relieved from the causation of evil.

In the second story of Creation and the Fall, man is made of "mother earth" and spirit. Fashioned of the best materials, man was infused with the "breath of God," and became one with the heavenly intelligences. As to the "mythical" formation of Eve out of the side of Adam, literalism here is characterized by Philo as unworthy.¹⁵ The "tree of life" is piety, greatest of all virtues, by which the soul is established as immortal.

The downfall of man came with the creation of woman, and physical desire. The serpent is a symbol of "pleasure," while the speaking serpent is dismissed as a myth. The "garments" of skins were to point out "frugality," and as more noble than a purple robe.¹⁶ God made a body for Adam wherein He clothed the mind as with a garment of skin.¹⁷ God's purpose, Philo held, was to present a grand object lesson.

4. LIKE ALL LIVING CREATURES MAN HAS "ANIMAL" SOUL.—Philo held that there are three classes of "living beings"—"animals, men, and incorporeal souls."¹⁸ After discussing "irrational [or animal] souls" (the souls of "lower animals"—"fishes, birds, and land-animals"), he describes these created "besouled" creatures, or "living souls," as having "sensation, imagination, impulse."¹⁹ These irrational souls are "earthlike," "corporeal."²⁰ "The irrational soul is corruptible . . . and mortal . . . , whereas the rational soul or mind is incorruptible . . . and immortal."²¹

Philo even follows Plato in holding that the animal, or irrational soul of man, with its body, was created by a subordinate god, or "secondary deities"—God's co-workers, something like the Gnostic Demiurge concept.²² The term *soul* might therefore mean either an "irrational" or a "rational" soul or both.²³

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270, 274, 286, 387.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 121.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 385, 386.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 386, 387.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 386, 387; see also pp. 270, 274, 286.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 395, 396.

Philo expressly states that man also possesses this irrational soul, with its "substance," in the corporeal form. Sometimes he suggests that the life "blood" or "breath" is the "essence" of the irrational soul.²⁴ He also calls the soul the "seed," or the "principle of the generation of animals"—in which animal life differs from plants. And Wolfson interestingly observes: "The three views which he [Philo] happens to mention can be identified with three views known in Greek philosophy."²⁵ Philo elsewhere speaks of the irrational soul as the "nutritive" and "sensitive" faculties, or the "seven faculties, namely the five senses, speech, and generation."²⁶ So, Philo held that "irrational souls" were created *with* bodies, and "rational souls" *without* bodies.²⁷

5. MAN ALSO HAS IMMORTAL "RATIONAL SOUL."—According to Philo, while animals have only an "irrational," or animal, soul (shared by man), man also has, in addition, a "rational soul or mind." Thus Philo says: "I . . . am many things, soul and body, and of soul there is a rational part and an irrational part." ²⁸ Man is thus a duad. And again like Plato in *Timaeus*, Philo holds that the *rational* soul was "formed by God Himself," coming direct from God to all men. And he declares that it is the "'image of God.'" He says the "'human mind'" is a "'fragment of that divine and blessed soul from which it cannot be separated.'" ²⁹ Again following Plato (*Timaeus*, 41d), Philo says that the number of rational souls is "'equal in number to the stars,'" but "prior to their descent into bodies they had their abode in the air."³⁰

The rational soul descends and enters a body that is under the dominance of the irrational soul, and thus sojourns in a land "'not its own.'" ³¹ Consequently there is a battle of the two souls, with man's free will deciding the outcome—plus divine grace.³² Hence there is justification of punishment for

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 389. See also p. 362.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 389, 390; cf. Charles, *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 473.

²⁹ Wolfson, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 390.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 431.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

man's wrong decisions and conduct.³⁵ The body is ever the foe of the soul.

6. CURIOUS THEORY OF "UNBODIED SOULS."—But that is not all. Wolfson summarizes Philo's curious teaching on "unbodied souls or angels," with the ethereal heavens as their "storeroom":

"Of the rational incorporeal and immortal souls created by God and stored away in the air not all descend into bodies. These incorporeal souls, he says, 'are arranged in companies that differ in rank.' The difference between these companies of incorporeal souls is that some of them are 'endowed with a diviner constitution' or 'are of a perfect purity and excellence,' and hence 'have never deigned to be brought into union with any of the parts of earth,' or 'have no regard for any earthly quarter,' or 'have never felt any craving after the things of the earth.'" ³⁶

This, Wolfson observes, frankly reflects Plato's position in his *Timaeus* and his *Phaedrus*, as regards individual "unbodied souls" that mount upward with wings. But some, losing their wings, take upon themselves "'an earthly body.'" To Plato, in the *Phaedrus* (246a, c), "where the souls are said to be uncreated," the difference between "the two groups of incorporeal souls" must have existed from eternity. And in the *Timaeus* (41d, e), "where the souls are said to be created," their descent is attributed to fate. But to Philo, the souls are created,³⁶ and the differences result from God's free determining will.

Philo holds that those incorporeal rational and immortal souls which do not descend into bodies—in other words, become incarnated—are "what Scripture calls angels, though some philosophers call them demons." The Greek term *angelos* means "heavenly messenger." And again there is further similarity to Plato,³⁶ who also holds that demons are souls (*Phaedrus* 246a, d, e). And Philo declares that these statements about angels and demons are not myths.³⁷

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 432, 435.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

7. ROLE OF UNBODIED SOUL-ANGELS.—According to Philo the original abode of these incorporeal unbodied souls—as angels (or demons) invisible to us—is “‘in the air.’” That is, they “‘range through the air’” and inhabit the ethereal heavens. But this too is patterned after Plato.³⁸ Plato also has those angels conducting men to the judgment after death, but Philo does not mention such a function.³⁹ In fact, he does not teach a general and final judgment.⁴⁰ He does speak, however, of the return of immortal souls to the divine or heavenly world to dwell among the angels.⁴¹

These incorporeal-soul-angels, according to Philo, are “‘instruments of divine providence,’” exercising care over the world as a whole and over mankind in particular. They have “‘charge and care of mortal man.’” They are messengers and intermediates, or “‘middle creatures.’” This contention Philo supports by Jacob’s dream of the ladder, with the angels ascending and descending.⁴² They are God’s “‘lieutenants,’” he states, His servants, ministers, “‘powers,’” His “‘divine army.’”

He interprets “‘Lord of Sabaoth,’” as “‘Lord of angels,’” or “‘Lord of the powers.’” Hence the angels are a “‘most sacred company.’”⁴³ And these intermediaries are necessary, according to both Plato and Philo, because God does not mingle or converse with man,⁴⁴ but is remote from him. So they are part of God’s plan and provision for directly governing the world.

And, according to Philo, these incorporeal-soul-angels sometimes appear to man, as in the cases of Hagar, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses (Gen. 16; 18; 22; 28; 32; Ex. 3; 14).⁴⁵ Furthermore “‘punitive” angels bring judgments—as on Sodom and Gomorrah. And there are also “‘evil,”” or “‘fallen,”” angels. These are also called “‘Sons of God” in Genesis 6, angels who

³⁸ In support Wolfson here cites numerous source statements from the writings of each. See pp. 369, 370.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

⁴⁰ Charles, *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 314.

⁴¹ Wolfson, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 372.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 373, 374.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 375, 376.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

revolted under Satan,⁴⁶ and who wrought confusion with the "daughters of men."

8. DEFINITION AND FUNCTION OF RATIONAL SOUL.—According to Philo, this rational soul is not corporeal (blood, etc.) but "incorporeal." While Plato places its seat in the "head" (*Timaeus* 69e; 90a), Philo says it might also be in the "heart." There is, he says, a reciprocal relation between the irrational and the rational soul, or souls.⁴⁷ But Philo also connects the mind of man with the Logos, as does Plato (*Timaeus* 46d).

Philo further distinguishes between the two "breaths"—just "breath" for the irrational creatures, and the "breath of life" that God breathed into Adam. The latter is "not air in motion" but a "'divine power,'" which Moses denominated the "'image,'" a "'divine and invisible breath.'" Philo says the "rational faculty . . . is a 'fragment of the universal soul.'" This "'divine spirit,' which God breathed into Adam" is an "'effulgence of the blessed and thrice-blessed nature of God.'" ⁴⁸

9. IMMORTALITY DEFINED AS "ETERNAL PERSISTENCE."—Then Wolfson immediately notes: "Besides irrationality and rationality, corporeality and incorporeality, these two souls of men are distinguished one from another by mortality and immortality."⁴⁹

"The irrational soul is the corruptible and mortal soul whereas the rational soul is the incorruptible and immortal soul." But this distinction likewise reflects the view of Plato (*Timaeus* 69c). And like Plato, Philo says that "the souls which are immortal 'soar back to the place whence they came.'" ⁵⁰ But deviating from Plato, Philo considered the immortal rational soul as "ungenerated" (cf. *Phaedrus* 246a). And according to Wolfson: "In Philo, because of his denial of a universal soul, immortality means the *eternal persistence of the individual soul as a distinct entity*."⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 382-385.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 394, 395.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁵² *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

10. RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY OF SOUL.—In the time of Christ, and thus of Philo, the two beliefs of the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul were already in vogue in Judaism. The resurrection was stressed primarily among the Palestinian Jews, with Innate Immortality among the Hellenistic Jews. There was constant discussion over the divergent viewpoints involved. Echoes of this appear in the Wisdom and other apocalyptic writings, particularly in *The Wisdom of Solomon* (4:1). In the light of this Wolfson comments:

"It is not surprising therefore that Philo should also look for a scriptural proof-text in support of the belief in the immortality of the soul. The proof-text which he produces is the verse in which God says to Abraham, 'But thou shalt go to thy fathers nourished with peace, in a goodly old age.' Commenting on this verse, Philo says: 'He here clearly indicates the incorruptibility of the soul, when it transfers itself out of the abode of the mortal body and returns as it were to the metropolis of its fatherland, from which it originally migrated into the body,' for 'what else is this but to propose to him and set before him another life apart from the body?'"⁵³

This, of course, involves a sort of transmigration of souls, but not involving the lower animals. As to the resurrection aspect, Charles comments,

"As matter was incurably evil there could of course be no resurrection of the body. Our present life in the body is death; for the body is the 'utterly polluted prison of the soul.'"⁵⁴

11. DEFINITIVE MEANING OF "FATHERLAND" OF SOUL.—Philo discusses three possible meanings of "fatherland" in Scripture, as intimated by the term "thy fathers" (Gen. 15:15), to which the rational soul returns. He rejects three views already current among Hellenistic Jews, adopted from Greek philosophy. These involve, *first*, "the sun, moon and other stars"—that the soul will "upon the death of the body mount to heaven and there assume the spherical shape of stars," continuing in that condition until the general "conflagration."

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 397, 398.

⁵⁴ Charles, *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 314.

Support of such a view was sought in the verse "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). Three of the current apocalyptic writings so affirmed—2 *Baruch* 51:10, "And they shall be made equal to the stars"; 4 *Ezra* 7:97, "Their face is destined to shine as the sun, . . . destined to be made like the light of the stars"; and *Enoch* 104:2, "Ye shall shine as the lights of heaven."⁵⁶

The *second* concept was that immortal souls ascend to Heaven, where they live for a certain period of time among the "ideas," evidently based on Plato (*Republic* 6:509, 510; 7:517; 10:614 ff.).⁵⁶ The *third* is that upon the death of the body the rational soul of each individual is "reabsorbed into the universal soul, that is, the primary fire or ether, of which it is only a part"—an Aristotelian view.⁵⁷ But none of these was acceptable to Philo. Souls do not become stars, for stars are made of the elemental fire, whereas souls are immaterial. For the same reason they are not resolved into the primary fire or ether.

Nor could he accept the view that souls go back to Heaven to dwell among mere "ideas," for ideas are not in the heavens but in the world of intelligence. Wolfson says Philo's view, repeatedly stated, was that—

"the souls, on departing from the bodies, do indeed go back to heaven, but there they rejoin that company of souls which have never descended into bodies, namely, angels."⁵⁸

12. SOULS RETURN TO REALM OF "UNBODIED."—So, according to Philo, to be "gathered to his people" is simply a euphemism for death, the "people" being the "people of God," the angels. So he concludes, they are "equal to the angels." Thus:

"We who are here joined to the body, creatures of composition and quality, shall be no more, but shall go forward to our rebirth to be among the unbodied."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Wolfson, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 398, 399.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 399, 400.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 400, 401.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 401, 402.

Thus the view of Philo that these "immortal souls" find their final abode in the heavens by the side of the "angels," accords with the view of Plato in the *Phaedrus*, that immortal souls soar to the outermost heavens, the "infinite void" which surrounds the world. The same view is found in the inter-Testament apocalyptic writings, as "They shall be made like unto angels" (2 *Baruch* 51:10), and, "Ye shall become companions of the hosts of heaven" (*Enoch* 104:6). So Heaven, the home of the angels, is the ultimate abiding place of the immortal souls. Thus Abraham and Jacob were "added to the people of God." Elijah also was "carried up with a whirlwind" into Heaven, to be among the angels.⁶⁰

13. MERGES IMMORTALITY AND RESURRECTION.—Philo uniformly speaks of the immortality of the soul rather than the resurrection of the body, and never as distinguished from immortality. Thus he drew upon the "traditional vocabulary of resurrection" to set forth his view of immortality. His distinctive mark of resurrection was a "new life," a "recovery of life," and was so used in 2 *Maccabees* 7:9, 23. So Philo describes immortality as a "new birth," turning a corporeal resurrection into something incorporeal.⁶¹ Thus in this area Philo echoes the thoughts and words of Plato—all souls return to the place whence they come.

14. ENDLESS PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.—Plato had held that the rational soul is by its very nature indestructible, and cannot be destroyed by the wickedness of the body. Thus the soul of the wicked was believed to be "indestructible in the same sense as the soul of the righteous." Plato had likewise taught that all that the wickedness of the body can do to the soul is to cause it to go through certain stages of reincarnation in beasts (*Timaeus* 42b ff.; *Phaedrus* 249b), or to pass through a certain period of purification in a kind of Purgatory (*Phaedrus* 249a; *Laws* 905a ff.).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 402, 403.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 404, 405.

On the other hand, the Stoics held that the soul ceases to exist immediately upon the death of the body, and is at once absorbed in the universal soul (*Diogenes* 7:156). Others held that such souls continue to exist, but after a period of time perish, together with their bodies.⁶² Philo refers to these views, and in certain places seems to leave the question open. Here is one such statement:

“‘When we die, is it [the soul] extinguished and destroyed together with our bodies, or does it continue to live a long time?’”⁶³

It should be noted that in Judaism those who believed in immortality “speak of it as a reward reserved only for the righteous but denied to the wicked.” Thus the Palestinian author of the *Psalms of Solomon* says, “‘The interitance of sinners is destruction and darkness’” (15:11 [10], cf. 14:6 [9]), and “‘sinners shall perish forever’” (15:15 [13]; cf. 15:13 [12]). Philo similarly says that “‘awaiting those who live in the way of the impious will be eternal death’” (*Post.* 11:39).⁶⁴ But many students of the Hellenistic Jewish literature believe that “inasmuch as the belief in the immortality of the soul must have come to them from Plato, like Plato, they must also believe in its indestructibility.”⁶⁵ However, Wolfson rightly observes that—

“the mere fact that Philo is in agreement with Plato as to the immortality of the soul does not necessarily mean that he must also be in agreement with him as to its indestructibility. Throughout his philosophy, as we have seen so far and as we shall see again, Philo constantly modifies Plato’s philosophy by introducing into it some new element. The new element which he has introduced into the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul is the possibility of its destruction in the case of the wicked, a possibility which logically follows from his belief that its immortality in the case of the righteous is due only to an act of divine providence.”⁶⁶

Wolfson refers to the fact that Philo argues that nothing in the world is really perishable, inasmuch as the individual belongs to the Eternal. Philo discusses the views of Aristotle, Plato, and the Stoics with regard to this. But Philo does not

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 407, 408.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

use the Aristotle emphasis of the "immortality of the *race*," but rather the "immortality of the human *soul*." He speaks of " 'the true Hades' " (Hades standing in the Septuagint for the Hebrew Sheol).⁶⁷ In another place he says:

" 'He [God] banishes the unjust and ungodly soul from himself to the furthest bounds and disperses it to the place of pleasures and lusts and injustices; that place is most fitly called the place of the impious' " (*Congr.* 11:57).⁶⁸

But Wolfson comments further that in addition to punishment in this life, "Philo also believed in the punishment of the wicked after death."⁶⁹

15. ATTESTED BY SCHOLARLY AUTHORITIES.—Despite the challenges of some, Philo undeniably taught that the torment of the wicked is to be eternal. And our findings are confirmed by several of the outstanding authorities on Philo. On this point R. H. Charles is positive.⁷⁰ And here is Philo's own unequivocal declaration:

"He who is cast forth by God is subject to eternal banishment. For to him who is not as yet firmly in the grip of wickedness it is open to repent and return to the virtue from which he was driven, as an exile returns to his fatherland. But to him that is weighed down and enslaved by that fierce and incurable malady, the horrors of the future must needs be undying and eternal: he is thrust forth to the place of the impious, there to endure misery continuous and unrelieved."⁷¹

James Drummond, principal of New College, London, and later of Oxford, summarized Philo's teaching on this point in the closing paragraphs of his two-volume classic:

"Death is not, as men suppose, an end of punishment. . . . What, then, is this death-penalty? It is to live always dying, and to endure, as it were, death endless and unending."⁷²

And H. A. A. Kennedy, professor of New Testament, New College, Edinburgh, in his able *Philo's Contribution to Religion*, likewise concurs as he epitomized Philo's position

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, note 131.

⁷⁰ See Charles, *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 314.

⁷¹ Philo, "On the Cherubim," 1:139, in LCL, Philo, vol. 2, p. 9.

⁷² James Drummond, *Philo Judaeus*, vol. 2, pp. 322, 323.

on the punishment of the wicked in this way: "Living in a continuous death, enduring, in a sense, a death which is immortal and endless."⁷³

Such was the series of revolutionary premises that led to Philo's conclusion. To accept the latter, one must logically be prepared to follow the former to be consistent.

16. TWIN STREAMS MERGE AT ALEXANDRIA.—From the foregoing evidence it is therefore apparent that the allied Innate-Immortality and Eternal-Torment dogmas, pertaining to the origin, nature, and destiny of man, did not first come to light in the Christian Church of the *second century* A.D. Rather, they had appeared—even then in derived form (from Platonism—in the Alexandrian segment of Judaism back in the *second century* B.C., more than three hundred years prior.

These revolutionary teachings broke forth, as already seen, in various apocalyptic writings—apocryphal, pseudepigraphical, and now finally in advanced form in Philo—from whom they flowed on into the Christian Church, which was already imbibing the same Platonic philosophy direct from its pagan fountainhead. These paralleling streams of Platonic teaching now met, merged, and gained the ascendancy in the thinking of Clement and Origen and the great Alexandrian Catechetical School, having as one of its cardinal principles the Innate-Immortality-of-the-soul doctrine, promulgated centuries before by Plato the Athenian philosopher.

⁷³ H. A. A. Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution to Religion*, p. 136.

Dead Sea Scrolls—Permeated Throughout With Conditionalism

The celebrated Dead Sea scrolls, retrieved from the silence of centuries in the now-famous caves of the cliffs and ravines near Khirbet Qumran, at the northern end of the Dead Sea, likewise have a definite bearing upon our quest. The Qumran scrolls comprise portions of numerous books of the Old Testament canon, together with a number of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings, commentaries, and special treatises.

Some of these tightly rolled manuscripts—truly treasures of the wilderness—were found stored away in tall clay jars (at least those of Cave I) for safety.¹ They were discovered in the first cave in 1947 by a Bedouin shepherd lad looking for his goats (with subsequent recoveries and excavations in ten other nearby caves). Their genuineness and antiquity have now been acknowledged with virtual unanimity by the world's great archeologists.² These scrolls comprise a series of finds without precedent.

With the exploration of these additional caves it became apparent that this collection of scrolls had been the treasured central library of the community's headquarters, which has since been excavated. Archeological evidence, consisting of

¹ Finds in caves subsequent to Cave I were not stored in jars, but scattered—indicating the haste with which these other precious scrolls were secreted in caves, as contrasted with the care bestowed on the scrolls placed in Cave I.

² Based on T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*; F. M. Cross, *The Scrolls From the Judaean Desert, The Ancient Library at Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies*; F. F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*; H. H. Rowley, *The Covenanters of Damascus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*; Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, and More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*; and other book and periodical sources.

scroll wrappings, coins,³ and pottery,⁴ clearly of the second and first centuries B.C. and the first century A.D., all helped to determine the dating. The radio-carbon test, applied to the decomposed cloth in which the scrolls were bound, likewise contributed to reducing a probability of dating.⁵ Thus the earlier battle of the scrolls has been largely resolved. (For chronological placement and category of the scrolls see Tabular Chart D, page 658.)

I. Timing and Teaching of Essene Brotherhood

The date of the composition of the principal non-Biblical scrolls, the work of unnamed writers, determined by the aforementioned evidences, may be assigned to the late second and first centuries B.C., and first century A.D. Therefore they fall largely within the inter-Testament period.⁶ They are evidently from the headquarters library of what would appear to be a quasi-ascetic Essene⁷ brotherhood at Qumran. And most of them were obviously hidden in the caves for safekeeping when

³ A convincing summary of coin findings, made by Dr. Leona Running of the faculty of Andrews University, drawn from Père de Vaux's reports in *Revue Biblique*, covering the five excavations, shows that the coins are dated from the time of Antiochus VI (in 136 B.C.), on into the Christian Era. They bear the imprint of a score of monarchs, the last being Agrippa II (c. A.D. 86).

⁴ Pottery found in the caves and the Khirbet, and in the earth fill of the tombs, ties these evidences all together, under the dating furnished by the coins, and within the period indicated by the radio-carbon test of the linen.

⁵ The total evidence has thus enabled the paleographers and archeologists to date the Qumran manuscripts "within the interval of a half century." See Cross, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

⁶ Gaster places the dates of composition between 170 B.C. and A.D. 68. See his preface, p. vii.

⁷ The Essenes (probably meaning "pious ones") were a semi-ascetic sect, not mentioned in the Bible or Talmud, but referred to by Philo, the elder Pliny, and Josephus. They evidently originated in the second century B.C., came to an end in the first century A.D. At the beginning of the Christian Era they numbered about four thousand.

Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran Yield Their Witness. Left—Entrance to Cliffside Cave; Center—One of the Tightly Rolled Scrolls; Right—Section of Scroll Originally Stored in Clay Jar.



PHOTO BY R. DE VAUX



COURTESY, AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH



PHOTO BY JOHN C. TREVER

destruction of the center by the Romans under Vespasian was imminent.

1. VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SCROLLS.—In addition to their important contribution in shedding light on the transmission of the Old Testament text, this body of writings represents the views of a pre-Christian Jewish community, or brotherhood, that had given up the world and sought to find God in the desert of Judea.⁸ Gleams of a highly developed Messianic hope appear, and mention is made of a Teacher of Righteousness, to bring the new age to birth. Signs to be seen in the last generation are listed.⁹ The tone and concept of the writings are wholly in conflict with those of their contemporaries—Philo of Alexandria and Josephus of Palestine. There were some differences, however, between the people of the Qumran scrolls and the traditional concept of the Essenes, as evidenced by the sources.¹⁰ This was evidently due to variant views held by the various groups of Essenes.

2. LIKE WALDENSES OF MEDIEVAL TIMES.—The people of the scrolls considered themselves the “remnant,” the “elect,” the true Israel, the “Sons of Truth,” continuing God’s covenant and seeking to re-emphasize the teachings of their forefathers in the days of Moses. They claimed understanding and vision, and felt themselves opposed by Belial and his forces, by men of corruption and lies, and the “Sons of Darkness.”¹¹ They sought to escape the political disturbances of the times and the venality of the Jerusalemite priests. To avoid pollution, they shunned contact with other Jews.

Above all, they sought to interpret the meaning of the present world order and the new order coming. They believed a great crisis hour to be approaching, when the great “cycle of the ages” was about to “complete its revolution.”¹² A final

⁸ They are charged with celibacy by Josephus. But in the texts of Qumran, women and children are mentioned, and in the extensions of a supplemental cemetery the skeletons of women and children are found. See Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁹ F. F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, chaps. 7, 8.

¹⁰ F. M. Cross, *Ancient Library at Qumran*, p. 71.

¹¹ Gaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-331, 335-337.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

war was to be fought—"The War Between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness"—and there would be a titanic struggle of the two spirits. The people of Qumran represented a revolt against doctrinal departures, and a return to the primitive Hebrew faith. And in this respect they might be likened to the Waldenses of medieval times in the Christian Era, as will shortly become evident.

3. APPROACHING END OF PRESENT AGE.—Their *Manual of Discipline* (or Rule of the Community), their *Book of Hymns*, or *Psalms of Thanksgiving*, and their *War of the Children of Light With the Children of Darkness*, together with their descriptions of the "Final Age," all bear on the nature and destiny of man. The scrolls parallel and incorporate many of the Conditionalist apocryphal and pseudepigraphical teachings of the inter-Testament period that we have just surveyed. And they are distinctly apocalyptic in structure.

They believed in a "final conflagration" similar to that set forth in the *Sibylline Oracles* (of c. 140 B.C.), and held in common some of the teachings of the pseudepigraphs, such as the Conditionalist *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* and *The Slavonic Book of Enoch*. Their teachings on the approaching renewal of all things were similar to those of the *Book of Jubilees*. Evidently the Essenes were largely the producers and bearers of the apocalyptic literature of Judaism in this inter-Testament period.¹³

Their eschatological views dwelt on the culminating events of the ages—the outcome of death, judgment, the end of the present order and establishment of the new. These were obviously among their chief concerns. Josephus calls them "fatalistic."¹⁴ It is evident that the brotherhood sought to maintain the "true" faith in an age of manifest apostasy and confusion, before the scenes of final judgment should overtake mankind. They have somewhat of a predestinarian tone.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁴ Flavius Josephus *Antiquities* xiii. 5.9, in *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, p. 264.

4. MAJOR EMPHASIS IS ON LAST THINGS.—In T. H. Gaster's fifteen-page Analytical Index, four pages are taken up with the "Last Things," or eschatological doctrines (pp. 337-340).¹⁶ His documented analysis indicates that the brotherhood divided history into two eras—the "Era of Wrath" or Wickedness, and the "Era of Favor."¹⁷ The "Requital" is called the "Final Era," "Time of Visitation Inquisition," "Final Judgment," and "Day of Requital," when "Spirits and angels also will be judged." It is also a time of "conflagration" and of "War against Belial."¹⁸

Among the "Rewards" are listed "Renewal of the World," "Eternal Peace," "Sevenfold Light," et cetera.¹⁹ "God records deeds of men for reward or punishment"; when the righteous will acquire a "crown of glory" and a "robe of majesty."²⁰ Cross points out the impressive fact that these Essenes—

"search the Scriptures and interpret their prophecies eschatologically as several scholars have pointed out. Essene exegesis has no real parallel either in Rabbinic Judaism, or in Philonic Judaism. Their interpretation is neither legalistic nor allegorical. But it falls precisely into the pattern of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament. In both, exegesis is 'historical' (i.e., eschatological), and pneumatic."²⁰

Theirs constitutes a unique contribution in a grave transition hour.

5. PROMINENT PLACE GIVEN TO ANGELS.—According to the same Analytical Index, their "Angelology" was elaborate. Angels are variously called "divine beings," "host of heaven," "host of the holy ones," "eternal host," "sons of heaven." Particular angels are designated as "Prince of Lights," "Angel of Darkness," "Angel of Truth," "Angel (s) of the Presence," "Angels of Destruction," and the "Angel of Adversity." And there are guardian angels, protective angels, and *participants in the final eschatological war*.²¹

¹⁶ Dr. THEODOR H. GASTER, expert in the period during which the scrolls were written, is professor of comparative religions at Dropsie College, Philadelphia, and visiting professor of history of religions at Columbia University. Dr. Gaster works in twenty-nine languages and dialects.

¹⁶ Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 337, 338.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

²⁰ Cross, *Ancient Library at Qumran*, p. 163.

²¹ Gaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-342.

II. Comprehensive Witness of Scrolls on Man's Nature and Destiny

It is now desirable to check the Qumran scrolls systematically with a view to tracing their unique witness on Conditionalism. We shall accordingly follow this aspect through consecutively, with documentation. If there is some repetition of thought in the several parts, this cumulative witness will but enforce the preponderance of the position maintained.

1. SINNERS "PERISH"; RIGHTEOUS "DESTINED" FOR "LIFE ETERNAL."—The "Zadokite [or Damascus] Document"—another copy of which had previously been discovered in 1896 in a Cairo synagogue, and dated about 176 B.C.—which is here cited, speaks (i, i-ii, 12) of God's sparing a "remnant," not consigning them "to utter extinction."²² (The Gaster translation is followed in all quotations.)²³ In contrast, on "God's judgment on the wicked" (ii, 2-13, 14-iii, 12), the Document speaks of their "pre-determined" end, and how the ancient sinners "perished," and "became as though they had never been."²⁴ On the contrary, of the "righteous remnant" (iii, 12-iv, 6) it says, "They that hold fast unto Him are destined for life eternal."²⁵ This position is sustained throughout the scrolls.

2. RIGHTEOUS STAND IN GOD'S PRESENCE FOREVER.—In the "Hymn of the Initiants" (*Manual of Discipline*, cols. x-xi), exulting in the "Most High" as the "Fountain of all knowledge, Spring of holiness, Zenith of all glory, Might omnipotent,"²⁶ the writer declares that "with God lies the judgment of all living, and He it is will award each man his deserts." Note is then taken of the "Day of Requital" (note 23: "Doomsday") for the reprobate.²⁷ However, for the righteous God has—

²² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²³ Dr. Gaster's translations are recognized as "free" and popular rather than exactly literal but they are the best available.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

"chosen to posses [*sic*] them for ever. He has given them an inheritance in the lot of the Holy Beings, . . . a fabric of holiness, a plant evergreen, for all time to come."²⁸

On the contrary, the writer says his sins condemn him to "communion with . . . all that walk in darkness." He adds, "For a mortal's way is [not] of himself," the "judgment lies with God."²⁹ And this is in contrast with "the favor which Thou hast assured to all the mortal elect, to stand in Thy presence for ever."³⁰ Then he asks, "What is mere mortal man amid Thy wondrous works?" And he answers, "He is but a molded shape, a thing nipped out of the clay, whose attachment is but to the dust."³¹

3. MAN CREATED FOR ETERNITY.—In the first psalm of thanksgiving (I, 5-39), God is portrayed as, in creation, calling into being "spirits immortal" in "the form of holy angels," assigned to guide in the preservation of the order of the universe.³² "So too" with "man," he observes; he was "shapen of clay"—a favorite expression. He too was created "for all the days of time and for ages infinite"—"for all the years of eternity."³³ But, alas, he became sinful and polluted, "a spirit errant and wayward," and thus coming under judgment. Then come the interesting words:

"All things are inscribed before Thee in a recording script, for every moment of time, for the infinite cycles of years. . . . No single thing is hidden, naught missing from Thy presence."³⁴

But through God's "lovingkindness" provision is made for the "spirit of man" to be "cleansed" of sin's "taint," that God's "wonders may be shown forth."³⁵ There will be a "just sentence upon him."³⁶

4. NO "ESCAPE" FOR WICKED IN "FINAL DOOM."—In Hymn 6 (III, 19-36), the hymnodist thanks God because He has "taken a spirit distorted by sin, and purged it of the taint of much

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 125.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

transgression, and given it a place in the host of the holy beings," and "made a mere man ["molded of clay"] to share the lot of the Spirits of Knowledge."³⁷ But he notes how, for those caught in the "nets of wickedness" and "corruption," there is—

"no hope of escape; when the hour of judgment strikes, when the lot of God's anger is cast upon the abandoned, when His fury is poured forth upon dissemblers, when the final doom of His rage falls on all worthless things; when the torrents of Death do swirl, and there is none escape."³⁸

Reference is then made to "rivers of Belial":

"Rivers that are like fire which sweeps with flaming sparks devouring all that drink their waters—a fire which consumes all foundations of clay, every solid bedrock; when the foundations of the mountains become a raging blaze, when granite roots are turned to streams of pitch, when the flame devours down the great abyss, when the floods of Belial burst forth unto hell itself."³⁹

Then, he continues, "God thunders forth," and—

"the hosts of heaven give forth their voice, and the world's foundations rock and reel; when warfare waged by the soldiers of heaven sweeps through the world and turns not back until final doom—warfare the like of which has never been."⁴⁰

III. Fate of Wicked Is Utter Extinction

I. WICKED TO BE "FOUND NO MORE," "CUT OFF," WIPED OUT.—In Hymn 8 (IV, 5-40), the dread fate of the wicked transgressors is further rehearsed: "Thou wilt sentence all men of deceit to be cut off, and all the prophets of error will be found no more."⁴¹

Contrariwise: "They that are pleasing to Thee shall stand in Thy presence for ever, and they that walk in the way Thou desirest rest firm for all time."⁴²

But of "froward men," God passes "sentence on them that they be cut off."⁴³ Then the hymnodist adds by way of con-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 140.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

trast, "Righteousness lies not with man, nor perfection of conduct with mortals. Only with God On High are all works of righteousness." He will "bring unto perfection the life of mortal man; that all His works may know how mighty is His power, how plenteous His love to all who do His will." ⁴⁴

But of "wicked men" who oppose His "covenant" the writer declares:

"For Thou wilt wipe out all sin, and in Thy bounty it lies to purify man from guilt. Man alone cannot do as Thou hast done; for Thou it is didst create both the righteous and the wicked." ⁴⁵

2. BURNED UNTIL THEY BE "DESTROYED."—The same paralleling theme is continued in Hymn 10 (V, 20-VI, 35). The "rivers of Eden," with their "evergreen" boughs, thrive "beyond [all bounds]," ⁴⁶ but the "[plant of Beli]al," has its roots sunk down "into hell." "In its [fiery] sparks all [infamous] men shall be burned; it shall be as a flame *devouring* the guilty, until they be *destroyed*." ⁴⁷

The hymnodist closes with a portrayal of the "hosts of wickedness" battling the "Warrior" of Heaven, who brings forth "His weapons of war." His legions go forth, "[and there shall be no es]cape, for the guilty impulse of men. They shall *trample it to destruction*," ⁴⁸ and none shall escape. They shall be "cut off when the battle is joined with the presumptuous [*sic*]." ⁴⁹

3. RIGHTEOUS "NEVER DIE"; WICKED "WITHER."—In Hymn 14 (VIII, 4-36), the figure is changed. Men are likened to "trees." The righteous "stand planted . . . trees that never die," with roots sunken in the stream of living water. ⁵⁰ But in contrast:

"[The trees of the wicked shall be felled] and sink like lead in mighty waters; and a fire shall go forth, and they shall wither. But the orchard which I have planted shall bloom for ever." ⁵¹

And he adds, in Hymn 15 (IX, 2-X, 12), that as man is brought "unto judgment," those who have "forfeited" the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166. (Brackets in original.)

righteous provisions of God “[are doomed to perdition].”⁵³ Then he observes, “What is man, mere earth, kneaded out of [clay,] destined to return unto the dust.”⁵³

4. ANGELS BROUGHT TO JUDGMENT AND HELL.—In Hymn 16 (X, 14-XI, 2) he adverts to the fallen angels:

“Howbeit, when I hear how Thou judgest even Thine angels so mighty in strength, how that Thou arraignest even the Holy Host, my heart is sorely racked, my loins are all a-quake, my sighing reaches down into the nethermost abyss and penetrates withal into the chambers of hell. . . . For how much more upon man will Thy sentence go forth? And will not Thy judgment be wreaked upon all Thy works?”⁵⁴

Then he joyously declares in Hymn 17 (XI, 3-14) that “Thou hast granted it unto man [“molded of clay”] to be purged of transgression,” and “to share the lot of Thy Holy Beings, to the end that this worm which is man may be lifted out of the dust to the height of eternal things,” to join the “choir invisible, to be for ever renewed with all things that are.”⁵⁵

IV. Eternal Redemption and Utter Extinction

1. “DUST” RETURN TO “DUST.”—And in Hymn 19 (XI, 27-XII, 35) the hymnodist repeats an oft-used phrase, “Behold, I was taken from dust, nipped out of clay.” But, he continues, because of pollution, “that which is molded of clay must needs return to dust at the end of its [term,] [and lie again] in the dust whence it was taken.” Then he says that the “holy [angels,] the everlasting [spirits,] the reservoirs of glory,—even they cannot tell forth all Thy glory. . . . How much less, then, he who returns to his dust?”⁵⁶ That is the natural lot of a “creature of clay.”

2. “PERDITION ETERNAL” VS. “ENDURING” FOR ALL TIME.—In Column XIII, 1-21, the hymnodist asserts:

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 178

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 173.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 184. (Brackets in original.)

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

"Upon all things that defy Thee Thou bringest perdition eternal. So, if mortal men keep faith with Thee, behold, Thou crownest their heads with glory everlasting."⁵⁷

Then he meditates upon "the hosts of Thy spirits, the congregation of Thy Holy Beings," and God's creative and sustaining power, declaring, "Thou art a God everlasting," and "[that yet the time will come] [when Thou wilt reward the righteous,] and the wicked will be utterly [doomed]."⁵⁸

3. INIQUITY CANNOT EXIST IN GOD'S PRESENCE.—The theme runs on throughout the remaining hymns. Column XIV, 1-27, speaks of "men of truth and sons [of light]," to be "for all generations of time and for all the [ages to come]."⁵⁹ He asserts that "Thou wilt bring eternal doom on all frowardness and transgression."⁶⁰ But the Lord forgives "them that repent their transgression, but visitest the iniquity of the wicked."⁶¹

In Column XV, 9-26, the hymnodist asserts that "not by the hand of flesh can a mortal order his way."⁶² God "created the righteous, . . . to heed Thy covenant and walk in Thy ways." He opened "all the straitness of his soul to everlasting salvation and perpetual peace unfailing." But the wicked are reserved "for the day of slaughter," and "great judgments" will come upon them.⁶³ He concludes by saying that "Thou art a God of truth and [hatest]⁶⁴ all wrongdoing; and no iniquity shall exist in Thy presence."⁶⁵

4. "MORTAL FLESH" REDEEMED FOREVERMORE.—The closing Hymn (Columns XVII, 1-XVIII, 30) deals, along with other themes, with "divine forgiveness" and "Thanksgiving for divine grace." Though "fire" that devours to the "nethermost hell" is the doom that awaits the wicked, the "redeemed" will "serve Thee in constancy," and "their seed" shall be "ever in Thy presence."⁶⁶ And the hymnodist implores, "Redeem [my soul,] and let the wicked be brought to an end!"⁶⁷

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 187. (Brackets in original.)

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188. (Brackets in original.)

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁶¹ Alternate reading, "wilt destroy," in footnote.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

In closing, he extols God, who has "done these things," and he asks, "For what is mortal flesh [that Thou shouldst so exalt it] and work such wonders with it?"⁶⁸ And he repeats the thought and phrase "mortal flesh," and renders praise that God redeemed and transformed him, that he "may stand [before Thee] evermore unshaken in the glow of Perfect Light, till the end of time, where [no] darkness is for ever, and where all is peace unbounded until the end of time."⁶⁹

V. Wicked Cease and Wrong Disappears Forever

1. WICKED WILL CEASE TO EXIST.—Turning to the "Commentary on Psalm 37" (Fragment A: col. i), verse 10—"Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. Though I look well at his place, he shall not be"—the commentator in the Qumran scroll says, "They shall cease to exist, and no wicked man shall be found on earth."⁷⁰

2. FINAL CLASH OF GOOD AND EVIL.—The "Triumph of God" in the final age portrays "The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness." In the Prologue (i, 1-17), the battle is pictured as between the "Sons of Light" and the "host of Belial."⁷¹ As to the forces engaged in that final clash the writer says, "For [with Thee] in heaven are a multitude of holy beings, and armies of angels are in Thy holy abode, to [serve as] Thy [legionaries]; and down on earth Thou hast [likewise] placed at Thy service the elect of an holy people." Then he speaks of the "charter of [Eternal] Life—an assurance that throughout all the epochs of time Thou wilt be their king."⁷² Next, in contrast with the "Angel of Light," and his "spirits of truth" he speaks of Belial, the "angel of hostility," and his evil "angels of destruction," following the "laws of darkness."⁷³

3. "EVERLASTING REDEMPTION" VS. "ANNIHILATION."—

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 201. (Brackets in original.)

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202. (Brackets in original.)

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 281, 282.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 298. (Brackets in original.)

Then, in "Preparations for Battle" (xv, 1, 2), after speaking of the "time of trouble for Israel," and of the "[visita]tion of war upon all nations," the writer adds: "They that have cast their lot with God shall [be blessed] with everlasting redemption, but annihilation shall overtake all the wicked nations."⁷⁴

Similarly, in the "New Covenant" (Column 1), in contrasting the "wicked" and the "righteous," the further words appear, "[Thou wilt make] an end of all that oppress us."⁷⁵

4. WRONG WILL DISAPPEAR FOREVER.—And finally, in *The Coming Doom* the writer closes by declaring:

"Wrong is going to depart before Right, as darkness departs before light. As smoke disappears and is no more, so will Wrong disappear forever. But Right will be revealed like the sun. . . . The thing is certain to come. The prophecy is true, and by this you may know that it will not be revoked."⁷⁶

Such is the sustained Conditionalist emphasis of these remarkable scrolls of Qumran written in a time of change and uncertainty in other sections of Jewry. The Old Testament refrain echoes and re-echoes throughout these writings in direct antithesis to the contemporary contentions of Philo of Alexandria, noted exponent of Immortal-Soulism for all and Eternal Torment for the incorrigibly wicked. The contrast could not be more complete or vital. Two schools of thought prevailed as the period of the Old Testament gave way to the New.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GREAT DIGRESSION IN JEWRY.—Thus we rest our case after presenting the fateful intrusion of Platonic philosophy into the Alexandrian wing of the Jewish Church, nevertheless paralleled by the refreshing fidelity of others in Palestine to the historical positions of the Old Testament Scriptures on the true nature and destiny of man. The great departure has been witnessed. The split over basic concepts concerning the soul has become a reality—not only perma-

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 311. (Brackets in original.)

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

nently affecting the Jews but soon destined tragically to influence the rapidly expanding Christian Church as well.

Alexandria, scene of the Jewish departure, is before too long to become the spawning ground of a similar devastation of faith on the part of a large segment of the Christian Church. The new concepts were introduced by converts from the ranks of Neoplatonic philosophy, trained in or influenced by the Alexandrian ideology and appeal. These they brought with them into the church they had espoused. And these converts soon became the leaders in the digression. It is a story without a parallel in the annals of two great related churches. It is the record of the successful impact of a fascinating fallacy that captivated the mind and has so changed the course of thought as to become predominant throughout the Christian Era. It presents a virility unmatched in the annals of these paralleling religious movements.

PART IV
Historical Conflicts Compass the
Early Centuries
(A.D. 150 to A.D. 500)

*Positions of Subapostolic and Ante-Nicene
Fathers, and Post-Nicene Developments
Eventuate in a Theological Trilemma*

Subapostolic Writers Consistently Conditionalist

I. Significance of Testimony of Apostolic Fathers

The term *Apostolic Fathers*, coined later, embraces those Christian writers of the subapostolic age who lived nearest to, or whose lives partly paralleled, the last of the apostles. They are usually listed as Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, the writer of *The Didache* and of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Hermas of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Papias. And to these is sometimes added the writer of *The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus* and that of the *Homily of Clement*. The time spread is about the first half of the second century.

True, the writings are fragmentary. Some are lost, but others are preserved in whole or in part, though oft in tampered form. The precise authorship of certain extant treatises such as *The Didache* is not known. Nevertheless they reveal the faith of the writer at that time, and reflect with some fidelity views current in that early period. They are therefore of definite value in our quest, for they are the most primitive writings of early Christian witness that have been preserved, and constitute all of the available writings of the earlier successors of the apostles. Their contrast with the inspired writings of Scripture is, of course, tremendous.

Theirs was the hazy period of early dawn, before the amplified literature of the early philosophers of the church had developed. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers were largely letters. But they form the connecting link between the

Chart F

THREE CONCEPTS OF LIFE AND DEATH AMONG EARLY CHURCH WRITERS

I. CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY

1. Eternal Death of Wicked

II. UNIVERSAL INNATE IMMORTALITY

2. Endless Torment of Wicked

3. Universal Restoration of Wicked

APOSTOLIC FATHERS

	(Death Date) A.D.	
1	c. 100	CLEMENT of Rome
2	c. 107	Ignatius of Antioch
3	c. 120	<i>The Didache</i> (Palestine)
4	c. 140	Barnabas of Alexandria
5	c. 154	Hermas (Rome)
6	c. 155	Polycarp of Smyrna
7	c. 130	Epistle to Diognetus

ANTE-NICENE FATHERS

(Church Predominantly Greek)

8	c. 165	JUSTIN MARTYR ¹ of Samaria
9	c. 172	Tatian ¹ of Assyria
10	c. 180	Theophilus of Antioch
11	c. 190	Melito of Sardis
12	c. 196	Polycrates of Ephesus
13	202	IRENÆUS of Lyons
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19	280	Novatian of Rome
20	c. 330	Arnobius of Sicca
21		Clementine Homilies

	(Death Date) A.D.	
	190	ATHENAGORAS of Athens
		Pseudo-Clementines
	220	Minucius Felix of Africa
c. 240		TERTULLIAN of Carthage
c. 236		Hippolytus of Portus Romanus
	258	Cyprian of Carthage

	(Death Date) A.D.	
c. 220		CLEMENT ² of Alexandria
	254	ORIGEN of Alexandria
c. 270		Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Caesarea
	309	Pamphilus of Caesarea
c. 282		Theognostus and Pierius (Alexandria)

¹ Predominantly Conditionalist, but with some contradictory expressions.

² Changed from Conditionalist to Immortal-Soulist.

POST-NICENE FATHERS

(Church Predominantly *Latin*)

22	330	Lactantius of Nicomedia				
23				340	Eusebius of Caesarea	
24	373	Athanasius ¹ of Alexandria		c. 373	Titus of Bostra	
25				379	Basil of Caesarea	
26				c. 390	Diodorus of Tarsus	
27				398	Didymus of Alexandria	
28			397	Ambrose of Milan	c. 395	Gregory of Nyssa
29	c. 401	Nemesius of Emesa				
30			407	Chrysostom of Constantinople		
31			420	Jerome of Bethlehem		
32					428	Theodore of Mopsuestia
33			430	AUGUSTINE of Hippo		

VARIANT POSITIONS OF TRILEMMA ON HUMAN DESTINY AND FUTURE PUNISHMENT

This chronological and categorical table indicates the approximate dating and variant views on the nature and destiny of man held by approximately forty leading Church Fathers—Apostolic, Ante-Nicene, and Post-Nicene—down to Augustine. It thus classifies and groups the three conflicting postulates on human destiny and the future punishment of the wicked completely developed by the close of the third century.

The table discloses the fact that the dogma of universal Innate Immortality was not introduced until toward the close of the *second* century A.D.—ten writers of the *first* school being on record before the introduction of the *second* school, in the third century. It identifies those responsible for first fastening upon the church the Platonic dogma of the deathlessness of all souls, and because of this the corollary of endless life in torment for the incorrigibly wicked. It likewise shows how the Origenistic *third* school of Universal Restorationism did not appear until a half century later. Thus the fatal gap between the original positions of the primitive faith and these later innovations becomes apparent.

CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS: 1. TERTULLIAN and AUGUSTINE in particular, in maintaining the position of the Endless Torment of the wicked, held that they will be cast into eternal fire for punishment, which is scriptural. But, at the same time holding to the Platonic philosophy of inherent indefeasible immortality for all men, they erred in teaching that the wicked will burn on in conscious torment, forever without end. Thus they flouted the Bible declaration that after due and just punishment the wicked will be utterly consumed, pass out of existence, and cease to be.

2. On the other hand, ORIGEN and his followers, holding to the same general Platonic premise of universal Innate Immortality, taught that God will not permit sin and sinners to continue on defiantly forever—which position is likewise borne out by Scripture. But they likewise erred by introducing Universal Restorationism as the *means* of accomplishing this end. They thereby equally left the Divine Word for human invention and Platonic philosophy, and promised life where God had threatened death. Moreover, such a position involves a forced salvation—coercing the will of free moral agents to conform to universal righteousness.

3. It remains to be added that the Augustinian theory finally prevailed and became the “orthodox” dogma of the dominant medieval Roman Catholic Church. And it was likewise retained by a majority of the Protestant bodies that emerged during the Protestant Reformation.

4. Always, through the centuries, there have been holders of the original Conditionalist Immortality and final destruction of the wicked positions of the earliest church writers, the Apostolic Fathers, and Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. These positions continued to strengthen up until Lactantius. And these continuing witnesses have steadily grown in number and volume from Reformation days onward, climaxing with major developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[Some reserve must be made concerning a few writers, indicated by a superior figure (1), who were predominantly Conditionalist, but whose writings include expressions not always consistent therewith.]

Rome Ruled the World From Her Seven-hilled Splendor When the Followers of Christ Spread Their Message of Life Through a Risen Saviour.



apostles and the Ante-Nicene Fathers. They were, moreover, written in the time of accelerating speed in the spread of the church, and embraced the time of the early martyrs under the inhuman cruelties of pagan persecution, from Domitian onward.

They constitute, as it were, the lingering echoes of apostolic teaching, but in progressively distorted form. Such legends as that of the fabled phoenix were by this time beginning to appear—the phoenix being a sacred bird in Egyptian mythology, supposed to live for five hundred years. And, at the expiration of its life, it allegedly made a nest of twigs on which it died by burning itself alive. Then from the ashes, according to mythology, there arose another phoenix, young and beautiful. Thus it was that the phoenix came to be taken as an early symbol of immortality and the resurrection.

The church of this period, it is to be noted, was expanding while the might of Roman dominion was at its widest and loftiest sway. Thus the full, oppressive weight of pagan perse-



Rome and the Caesars Provided the Setting of Christ's Life and the Beginning of the Christian Church and Its Message of Life in Christ. Here are Nero, Augustus, and Diocletian.

cution and philosophy was exerted upon the expanding church, and an inescapable conflict developed. The Early Church was distinctly premillennialist in her expectancy of the Second Advent, which was ever her ardent hope and anticipation, to be inseparably accompanied by the literal resurrection of the saints and the establishment of the kingdom of God. Such is her eschatology.

The two ways, as they are called, are constantly set forth, and the endings of the ways, life and death—with eternal life and immortality as the gift of God for the redeemed, and restricted to believers; and the contrary doom of death and everlasting destruction for the impenitently wicked. This pattern, or emphasis, is woven consistently throughout the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, which we now examine.

NOTE: At the very outset of the excerpts to follow from the various Church Fathers, we would repeat that, as with the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writers of the inter-Testament period, we are not here offering a new and critical translation of these Early Christian Church writers. Rather, we are using standard acceptable translations as the basis for ascertaining their testimony and drawing sound conclusions therefrom, premised on their recorded teachings as to the nature and destiny of man. Occasionally, alternative translations are used for clarification. But these are taken from other recognized renderings.

II. Clement of Rome—Neither Innate Immortality Nor Eternal Torment

The earliest allegedly authentic writings of the subapostolic church period that has come down to us is an epistle by CLEMENT OF ROME. Though his life is shrouded in obscurity, he was an early presiding presbyter or overseer, afterward called bishop, of Rome. He is identified by such third-century writers as Tertullian and Origen as Paul's companion at Philippi (Phil. 4:3), and therefore a contemporary of John the apostle. According to Eusebius, Clement died in the third year of Trajan,¹ i.e., about A.D. 100.

In this transitional period the church at Rome held an important but not yet overshadowing place, such as it later came to occupy. Two epistles are extant under Clement's name. *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, written to a sister church in the name of the church at Rome, is very generally accredited as genuine—the “‘one acknowledged epistle,’” according to church historian Eusebius. He states that it was held in high esteem and “‘was publicly used in a great many churches.’”² It was probably penned about A.D. 95, says

¹ Eusebius. *The Church History of Eusebius*, book 3, chap. 34, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (hereafter abbreviated *NPNF*), 2d series, vol. 1, p. 166.

² *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 147.

Westcott,³ soon after the persecution under Domitian. The epistle comprises fifty-nine short chapters, and may be said to reflect the subapostolic age.⁴ On the contrary, the *Second Epistle* is universally recognized as apocryphal, and will therefore not concern us.

1. CLEMENT ON THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN.—Because of the unique early position of Clement—apparently the initial writer available after the passing of the apostles—we must survey his presentation in some detail. First of all, we must ascertain his eschatological positions, for they will automatically reveal his views concerning the nature and destiny of man. (See Tabular Chart—Three Concepts of Life and Death Among Early Church Writers—on page 758, for Clement's place in the triple categories into which the Apostolic, Ante-, and Post-Nicene Fathers group themselves.)

2. SECOND ADVENT AND RESURRECTION HOPE DOMINANT.—The Second Advent expectancy marks this treatise. Here is a characteristic reference, showing the Advent hope to be in the very forefront of Clement's thinking:

"Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His [Christ's] will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, 'Speedily will He come, and will not tarry;' and, 'The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Holy One, for whom ye look.'"⁵

And connected inseparably with the Advent is the resurrection, to which Clement attaches great importance. Thus he discloses his understanding of the eschatological order of events. This assurance of the resurrection he seeks to buttress from nature:

"Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the

³ Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 23, 24.

⁴ The only complete edition of the Fathers is the Latin and Greek series of J. P. Migne. Various English translations are available—J. B. Lightfoot, E. J. Goodspeed, Kirsopp Lake, W. K. L. Clarke, and the recent Roman Catholic translation by Francis X. Glimm. In studying the Apostolic Fathers we shall, however, use that of Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson in the standard *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series, which are available everywhere.

⁵ *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, chap. 23, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (hereafter abbreviated ANF), vol. 1, p. 11.

Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead. Let us contemplate, beloved, the resurrection which is at all times taking place.⁶ Day and night declare to us a resurrection. The night sinks to sleep, and the day arises; the day [again] departs, and the night comes on. Let us behold the fruits [of the earth], how the sowing of grain takes place. The sower goes forth, and casts it into the ground; and the seed being thus scattered, though dry and naked when it fell upon the earth, is gradually dissolved. Then out of its dissolution the mighty power of the providence of the Lord raises it up again, and from one seed many arise and bring forth fruit."⁷

Again, our Maker will "raise up again those that have piously served Him," and "'Thou shalt raise up this flesh of mine,'" according to promise.⁸

3. THEME PERSISTS THROUGHOUT GENUINE EPISTLE.—In chapter twenty-five of the epistle the fable of the curious and fanciful bird the phoenix⁹ is introduced, taken from Herodotus and Pliny. It is given as symbolizing the resurrection, and thus indicates the weird pagan imaginings that were even then beginning to appear in Christian Church thinking.¹⁰ But in chapter twenty-seven the Biblical resurrection is further stressed by Clement, and the Second Advent is referred to in chapter thirty-four. "*Life in immortality*" is presented as the gift of God in chapter thirty-five. Punishment "with death" is mentioned in chapter forty-one, and in chapter fifty we read this promise:

"For it is written, 'Enter in thy secret chambers for a little time, until my wrath and fury pass away; and I will remember a propitious day,'¹¹ and will raise you up out of your graves."¹²

Those are the high points.

4. ADVENT NOTE EVEN IN SPURIOUS SECOND EPISTLE.—Even in the so-called *Second Epistle*, or Homily, with its unknown author, the Advent note still echoes, though the epistle

⁶ Glimm's tr. adds, "and regard the seasons."

⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, pp. 11, 12. (Brackets in original.)

⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 26, p. 12.

⁹ *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 12, note 2.

¹⁰ Mosheim and Neander think this mythical material may be a later interpolation.

¹¹ Glimm's tr., "the good day."

¹² *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, chap. 50, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 18.

is without authority: "Let us then wait for the kingdom of God, from hour to hour, in love and righteousness, seeing that we know not the day of the appearing of God."¹³

We will now trace what Clement of Rome teaches in the authentic *First Epistle* in regard to immortality and punishment—with perishing, destruction, and death for the wicked, and salvation and life and immortality for the redeemed as the gift of God, for which reward we must wait.

5. SIGNIFICANT SILENCES IN CLEMENT'S WITNESS.—Scholarly Anglican Prebendary Henry Constable rightly calls attention to Clement's "silence on certain points." Clement "never speaks of the *immortality of the soul*,"¹⁴ either in thought or in phrasing, nor of *eternal punishing*, both of which concepts abound in later church writers, such as Tertullian (d. c. 240) and Augustine (d. 430). Clement says that man is a "mortal creature, consisting only of dust and ashes—his life as but the life of one day."¹⁵ This is significant. But he is far more than negative.

6. IMMORTALITY A "GIFT" OF GOD, TO BE SOUGHT FOR.—Clement sets forth immortality as one of God's glorious gifts to the redeemed. "Life in immortality," as he phrases it, is a *gift* of God to the righteous. And it is "prepared for such as wait for Him." To gain it we must "earnestly strive" for it, "in order that we may share in His promised gifts."¹⁶ Clement did not believe that the wicked either possessed Immortality by nature or should ever obtain it.

As to *zōē* ("life," or "existence"), Clement likewise uses it only in the sense of existence. He speaks of the "'*life of man* which may last but for a day.'" It is not mere "happiness," or "well-being," as contended by a later school of writers. With

¹³ *The Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, chap. 12, in *The Apostolic Fathers* (tr. by Kirsopp Lake), vol. 1, p. 147, Loeb Classical Library.

¹⁴ Henry Constable, *The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, p. 168.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* See *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* in *ANF*, chaps. 38, 39, 17, vol. 1, pp. 15, 9, 10.

¹⁶ *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, chap. 35, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 14.

Clement, "*righteousness is not life, but the way to life.*" " And it is God's will that we should "taste of immortal knowledge," "the knowledge of immortality."¹⁸

7. DEATH IS CESSATION OF ALL LIFE.—Clement presents "death" (*thanatos*) as the lot of all mankind. He sets it forth as the deprivation of life, the cessation of the faculties, the ending of all activities. All men are subject to its claims, except such as Enoch, who was exempted by translation, for, as Clement says, "death was never known to happen to him."¹⁹ But from Abel on to Christ and the martyrs, all suffered death.²⁰ Christ, as our Saviour and substitute, was "brought down to death." Again, "His soul was delivered to death, and He was reckoned among the transgressors, and He bare the sins of many."²¹

And when Clement discusses that death which is the ultimate fate of the wicked, he clearly states that they will ultimately be deprived of all existence, and become nonexistent. He does not refer to a merely spiritual death in sin, or of endless life in everlasting misery, as was later projected by Tertullian and Augustine.

8. WICKED TO PERISH, BE DESTROYED, CEASE TO EXIST.—As to the future punishment of the wicked, Clement uses such terms as *teleutaō* (to "finish," "accomplish," "end"), and thus "to die," as the end or loss of human existence. He goes on to state that death was visited upon the people of Jericho, and death came to the army of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. That is the death that comes upon all men through sin.

Again and again Clement uses the terms "perish" and "destruction"²² as the equivalent of "punished with death"²³ for the fate of the wicked. He frequently quotes from the

¹⁷ Constable, *op. cit.*, p. 169. See *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, chaps. 16, 17, 48, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 9, 10, 18.

¹⁸ *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, chap. 36, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 14, 15, note 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chaps. 4, 16, pp. 6, 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 9.

²² *Ibid.*, chaps. 12, 39, 51, 55, pp. 11, 15, 19, 20.

²³ *Ibid.*, chap. 51, p. 16.

Old Testament—the New Testament was not yet assembled—citing how “transgressors” are to be “destroyed from off the face of the earth”; how the prophet looked for the wicked and “behold, he was not” (chap. 14); how evildoers are to be “cut off,” along with “the remembrance of them from the earth” (chap. 22); how God will “destroy them,” literally they are to “be wiped out,” and God will “blot out” even “their name from under heaven” (chap. 53). That was Clement’s belief. It is sketchy, and not amplified, as with other writers soon to follow. But his witness is consistent and conclusive, and is significant because of its timing.

9. CONSTABLE’S SUMMARY OF CLEMENT’S VIEWS.—We can do no better than to quote Anglican Prebendary Constable’s conclusions, back in 1886, after completing his painstaking examination of this epistle of Clement:

“There can be no doubt then of Clement of Rome’s view of future punishment. By his silence and by his words he tells us what it was. With him there was no immortality for any but the redeemed of Christ. Endless life was, with him, only for those who would use it to the glory of the Giver. For all others there was, after resurrection and judgment, the sentence to a second death, the loss of existence for ever, from which they were never to be recalled to another life, another probation, another opportunity of salvation.”²⁴

Clement clearly believed that immortality was conditional—to be bestowed on the righteous only.

It will be essential for us to watch the sequence and relationships of the last events, or eschatology, held by each of these Apostolic Fathers, for therein lies the clue to their views of the nature and destiny of man. In this way the concepts of Clement of Rome, though fragmentary, become unmistakable. The others will unfold in similar but clearer pattern.

III. Ignatius of Antioch—Immortality Solely for Saints; Sinners to Perish

Presumably next in timing among the Apostolic Fathers comes IGNATIUS, surnamed Theophorus (d. c. A.D. 107), bishop

²⁴ Constable, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom by being thrown to wild beasts in the Flavian Amphitheater at Rome during the latter half of Trajan's reign (A.D. 98-117). He was converted to the Christian faith in maturity, but the rest of his personal life is wrapped in obscurity.

More controversy has centered around Ignatius' writings than around those of any other Apostolic Father. Of the fifteen epistles attributed to him eight are universally rejected as spurious. Those we will ignore. The remaining seven—to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, and Smyrnæans, and to Polycarp—are all in short and long Greek forms. It is generally believed that the longer versions have obviously been corrupted by later hands, so the shorter versions are here used.

But even they are doubtless "not free from interpolation."²⁵ For example, the episcopacy is given an emphasis wholly out of keeping with the known church polity of the early second century.²⁶ There is also a Syriac version of three epistles—the Ephesians, Romans, and Polycarp—which is helpful for comparison.

With this introduction we turn to the genuine Ignatian letters. (Ignatius' timing and category appear on Tabular Chart E, page 758.) For convenience we will note Ignatius' evidence by individual epistles.

1. TO THE EPHESIANS: IMMORTALITY IS "GIFT" OF CHRIST. —In *The Epistle to the Ephesians* Ignatius expresses consciousness and concern over the approaching latter-day crises lying before the church. Thus: "The last times are come upon us. Let us therefore be of a reverent spirit." He urges the men of Ephesus to "stand in awe of the wrath to come," and admonishes, "*Let us be found in Christ Jesus unto the true*

²⁵ "Introductory Note to the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians," in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 47.

²⁶ On the matter of interpolation, sound advice is given by the late Archbishop Dr. William Temple. He states that we should beware of accepting, or of reading into these early writings, concepts that were not introduced into the Christian creed for another century or so. Therefore statements or expressions that were common parlance later, but were foreign to the second century, may well be regarded as later interpolations. That is good counsel.



Clement of Rome—Immortality a Gift for the Righteous Only; Final Death the Deprivation of Existence for the Wicked.

Barnabas — Contrasts Eternal Life With Eternal Death; Satan, Sinners, and Evil to Be Destroyed.

Ignatius of Antioch—Immortality Solely for Saints; Death for Sinners Means Ceasing to Be.

Polycarp — Resurrection Is Sole Gateway to Immortality; Therefore Resurrection Pivotal.

Note on Portraits of Church Fathers Here Reproduced

While actual portraits, busts, or statues of the Church Fathers of the early centuries have only rarely been preserved, traditional likenesses based upon the descriptions left by contemporaries do exist. While they are but artists' conceptions, they help to personalize these often-noted men who were the leading figures in the conflict over truth, with its swaying battle lines and ultimate crystallization into three rival schools of thought on the nature and destiny of man.

We present them for what they are worth, that we may better visualize the principal personalities in the struggle that was tremendously real and determinative in that formative period of the early centuries, and that profoundly affected the life of the church across the entire Christian Era. These are largely drawn from Andre Trevet's remarkable book of portraits, with biographical sketches, printed back in 1584.

life."²⁷ We shall see how this continuing theme of *life in Christ* runs as a golden thread throughout his epistles. He refers, for example, in chapter three, to Jesus Christ as "our inseparable

²⁷ *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians*, chap. 11, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 54. (Italics supplied.)

life.”²⁸ This he enlarges upon in chapter seventeen by declaring that our Lord was anointed “that He might *breathe immortality into His Church.*” He warns against the “prince of this world” leading any “away captive from the life which is set before you.” And he asks, “Why do we foolishly perish, not recognising the gift which the Lord has of a truth sent to us?”²⁹

In chapter eighteen Ignatius alludes to the provision of the cross as being “to us salvation and *life eternal.*”³⁰ And in chapter nineteen he tells of “God Himself being manifested in human form for the *renewal of eternal life.* . . . Henceforth all things were in a state of tumult, because He meditated the abolition of death.”³¹ Then in chapter twenty he interestingly refers to “breaking one and the same bread, which is the *medicine of immortality*, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but [which causes] that we should *live for ever* in Jesus Christ.”³² Life, eternal life, is his burden.

In all of this Ignatius stresses the fact that the gift of Immortality comes only through Christ, whereas death is the inevitable portion of the sinner. He says, in chapter sixteen, that the person who “corrupts by wicked doctrine the faith of God” shall, thus defiled, “go away into *everlasting*³³ *fire*, and so shall every one that hearkens unto him.”³⁴

The unquenchableness of the fire does *not*, however, involve the later Augustinian conception of endless existence in torment of all who are cast into it. That dogma of the indefeasible immortality of the wicked as well as the righteous was an innovation not introduced for another century. So, in writing to the Ephesians, Ignatius holds that “immortality”

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 50. Note: Variant forms of division—into short chapters (*ANF*), into chapters and verses (Lightfoot), and merely into numbered sections (Glimm)—may cause some confusion. We follow the *ANF* style—chapters only.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 17, p. 56. Glimm reads, “incorruptibility” for “immortality.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, pp. 56, 57. (Italics supplied.)

³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 57. (Italics supplied.) Lightfoot reads, “as he designed to abolish death.”

³² *Ibid.*, chap. 20, p. 58. (Brackets in original, italics supplied.)

³³ Lightfoot tr., “unquenchable fire.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 56.

and "eternal life" for the righteous are the exact opposites of "perishing" for the wicked.

2. TO THE MAGNESIANS: DEATH IS CEASING TO BE.—At the very outset of Ignatius' *Epistle to the Magnesians* (in Ionia, Asia Minor) he speaks of Christ as "the constant source of our *life*."³⁵ He then sets forth the two basic alternatives in chapter five:

"Seeing, then, *all things have an end*, these two things are simultaneously set before us—*death and life*; and every one shall go unto his own place."³⁶

And he adds, concerning the "unbelieving," and those Christians "not in readiness to die into His passion," that "His [Christ's] *life is not in us*."³⁷ In chapter ten he makes the unequivocal statement, "For were He to reward us according to our works, we should *cease to be*."³⁸ This comports with Ignatius' message to the Ephesians, that when the sinner is rewarded according to his deeds he will then cease to exist. Thus there will be an end of all things—except of those who partake of the proffered life in Christ.

3. TO THE TRALLIANS: LIFE THROUGH CHRIST'S DEATH.—In the introduction to his *Epistle to the Trallians* (in Caria, Asia Minor, southeast of Ephesus), Ignatius speaks of Jesus Christ, "who is our hope, through *our rising again to Him*," or "in the *resurrection* which is by Him."³⁹ In this new treatise he continues to write in harmony with his previous declarations, as when he states in chapter two, concerning "Jesus Christ, who died for us," that "by believing in His death, *ye may escape from death*."⁴⁰ And again in chapter four, "I restrain myself, lest I should *perish* through boasting."⁴¹ And finally, in chapter

³⁵ *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians*, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 59.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 61. (Italics supplied.) Glimm's, tr., "to his appropriate place."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, note 3 reads, "after the likeness of His passion."

³⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 63. J. M. Denniston renders it, "We are no more" (*ouk etiesmen*) (*The Perishing Soul*, pp. 296, 297).

³⁹ *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians*, Introduction, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 66. (Italics supplied.)

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, p. 66. (Italics supplied.)

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 67. (Italics supplied.)

nine, that as the Father quickened Christ, so "after the same manner His Father will so *raise up us* who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the *true life*." ⁴² Life, then, is only in Christ, and those who do not possess this life are to perish.

4. TO THE ROMANS: RESURRECTION FOLLOWS SLEEP OF DEATH.—Chapter one of Ignatius' *Epistle to the Romans*, which is titled "As a Prisoner, I Hope to See You," was written as he was heading toward Rome, that great city, for his approaching martyrdom. Yet he welcomed such a fate, declaring, "It is good to set from the world unto God, that I may *rise again* to Him." ⁴³ The resurrection was his unfailing star of hope. And in chapter four, upon going to his death, to be "ground by the teeth of the wild beasts," which would become his tomb, Ignatius states significantly that he will then "have *fallen asleep* [in death]." ⁴⁴ Such was his concept of death.

In chapter six he declares, "It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth." ⁴⁵ And finally, in chapter seven he states that he has no pleasure in "corruptible food, nor in the pleasures of this life," but in the "bread of God," or "bread of life," and the "drink of God, namely His blood, which is incorruptible love and *eternal life*." ⁴⁶

5. EPISTLE TO POLYCARP: SLEEP, RESURRECTION, IMMORTALITY.—Finally, in *The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp*, bishop of the Smyrnæans, in chapter two Ignatius exhorts his fellow bishop to "be sober as an athlete of God: the *prize* set before thee is *immortality and eternal life*, of which thou art also persuaded." ⁴⁷ In chapter three Ignatius urges Polycarp to "weigh carefully the times. Look for Him who is above all

⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 70. (Italics supplied.) Lightfoot, "without whom we have no true life."

⁴³ *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans*, chap. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 74. (Italics supplied.)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 75. (Brackets in the original; italics supplied.)

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 76.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 77. (Italics supplied.)

⁴⁷ *The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp*, chap. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 94. (Italics supplied.)

time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes"—through the incarnation, and who is coming again.⁴⁸ Then he adds in chapter six, on "The duties of the Christian Flock," this comprehensive portrayal of the essence and unity of Christian life:

"Labour together with one another; strive in company together; run together; suffer together; *sleep* together [in death]; and *awake* together [in the resurrection], as the stewards, and associates, and servants of God."⁴⁹

That was Ignatius' eschatological concept and sequence—the latter days, the Advent, the resurrection, immortality.

6. GIFT OF GOD VERSUS WAGES OF SIN.—That is the burden of Ignatius' testimony. His continuing theme is the *gift of life and immortality for the saved in Christ*, with perishing and ceasing to exist for the lost, outside of Christ. There is no reference to this theme in his epistles to the Philadelphians and Smyrnæans. But in these five epistles cited he is utterly silent in regard to any Innate Immortality of the soul or anything akin thereto. Instead, the declarations of these separate treatises are a unit in setting forth immortality and incorruptibility as conferred in, and only through, Christ. It is not ours intrinsically. This he states constantly. But it is to be sought for and obtained.

As to the death of the wicked, even Dr. Edward Beecher, the Restorationist, admits that "in some cases the idea of annihilation is suggested."⁵⁰ Yes, but it is more than suggested, it is asserted. However, the better terms are "destroyed," "perished," "ceasing to exist." That from Ignatius.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 94.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 95. (Italics supplied.) The Syriac reads, "rise together" (*ANF*, vol. 1, p. 100).

⁵⁰ Edward Beecher, *History of Opinions on the Scriptural Doctrine of Retribution*, p. 283.

Immortality Bestowed at Advent; Wicked Destroyed

I. *Didache*—Follows Standard Pattern on the Two Ways

Still another early depiction of the now frequently stressed two ways—the “way of *life*” and the “way of *death*” in Christian conduct—was *The Didache* or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. This ancient Christian treatise,¹ dealing with early Christian order, beliefs, and worship, was still used as late as the fourth century. It was a discipline, employed in catechetical instruction, to prepare new converts for baptism.

The Didache is quite similar in emphasis and somewhat in phrasing to *The Epistle of Barnabas*. Both writers obviously drew from a common source, building on and expounding the current beliefs and practices for the subapostolic age. The treatise was “food for lambs,” not for those “of full age.” In size it is about the same as the Sermon on the Mount, and is couched in the simple language of that transitional period from New Testament usage to ecclesiastical Greek.

The Didache corresponds in teaching not only to *The Epistle of Barnabas* but to *The Shepherd of Hermas*, as well as to *The Apostolic Constitutions*. It is referred to by various early Christian writers, including historian Eusebius (d. c. A.D. 340). Athanasius (d. A.D. 373) states that it comprised reading for catechumens of Gentile birth. The purity of the text cannot be determined. There are doubtless some corruptions. Its

¹ The document was recovered by Greek Patriarch Philotheos Bryennios of Nicodemia, in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulchre at Constantinople.

timing is reckoned as approximating that of Barnabas, and is now placed at about A.D. 120. Its origin was possibly Egypt or Syria. (See Tabular Chart F, on page 758.)

The Didache was not prepared for ecclesiastical centers, but more for remote sections. There are frequent Old Testament references, with citations from the Gospels, as the New Testament was not yet compiled. There is marked similarity in eschatological outline to Paul's Thessalonian letters. And it is in definite conformity with apostolic teaching, representing a viewpoint that ere long came to be abandoned under the impact of the Neoplatonic pressures. Hence it differs from the recorded positions of the church generally, as held in post-Nicene times. But it was still the apostolic voice echoing in subapostolic times.

II. Eschatological Concept of Early Church in Outline

1. THE COMMON THEME OF SUBAPOSTOLIC AGE.—In harmony with characteristic subapostolic-age emphasis, the common theme of *The Didache*, or *The Teaching*, is the portrayal of the "two ways, one of life and one of death." The *unity* of the treatise is thus preserved, and the last chapter discloses the inevitable ending of the two ways—for the good it is *life*, for the wicked it is *death*. Following is an epitome of this early manual for baptismal instruction.

In essence, the "way of life" leads to readiness for the last events—the Second Advent, the resurrection, and the eternal kingdom. In contrast, the "way of death" leads to the final destruction of the impenitently wicked. Those who follow the way of life will practice the love of God to their fellow man, participate in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which point to "life eternal," and engage in prayers and meditation, awaiting the return of the Lord. There is no admixture of Jewish Philonian or Greek Alexandrian philosophy, and nothing remotely resembling the later Innate-Immortality-of-the-soul concept either in phrase or

thought, and its later common corollary, the Eternal Torment of the impenitent.

The eschatology of *The Didache* involves the living survival of a certain number of believers and the resurrection of the rest. Eternal life is conceived of as independent of the body. After the great apostasy the world passes through trial by fire, and the righteous are saved. These are the destined endings of the two ways.

2. INVOLVEMENTS OF THE "WAY OF LIFE."—Here are the exact citations. The opening sentence of chapter one reads:

"There are two ways, one of life and one of death; but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, thou shalt love God who made thee; second, thy neighbour as thyself."²

Then follow the main points of the Sermon on the Mount. *The Teaching* passes from the positive to the negative, and grosser and lesser sins are forbidden. After the listing of various precepts, chapter four ends, "This is the way of life" ("Barnabas, 'the way of light,'" note 29).³

3. "WAY OF DEATH" CONTRASTED WITH "ETERNAL LIFE" PROVISION.—Chapter five opens with "And the *way of death* is this." Barnabas' paralleling statement of the second way is intensified to the "way of *eternal death*." "Twenty-two sins are then listed in *The Didache*, which the righteous are to avoid. After warning against false teachers, there is admonition to baptize in "living water" (note 18: "Probably *running water*"), and to participate in the Lord's Supper. This prayer for the church, which is to be "gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom," is then suggested, beginning:

"We thank thee, holy Father. . . Thou, Master, almighty, didst create all things for Thy name's sake; Thou gavest food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to Thee; but to us [followers of Christ] Thou didst freely give spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Thy Servant [Jesus Christ]."⁵

² *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 377.

³ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 378.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 379. See note 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 380.

The prayer draws toward its close with:

"Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Thy love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Thy kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it."⁶

It closes with the appeal "Let this world pass away," and an admonition to repentance and holiness.⁷ Then it adds, "*Maran atha*"—"our Lord cometh."

4. PERILS OF COMING APOSTASY PORTRAYED.—The closing chapter (sixteen), on "Watchfulness; The Coming of the Lord," begins with the words:

"Watch for your life's sake (note 2; "over your life"). Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh."⁸

The warning is given that "the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if ye be not made perfect in the last time." That is a continuing theme.

We next read:

"For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; for when lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate and persecute and betray one another, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hand and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning."⁹

5. ESCHATOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF LAST THINGS.—And now follows the outline of the last things, in time's last hour, from *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. First, the time of trial:

"Then shall the creation of men come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved."¹⁰

Finally comes the climax, at the Second Advent, presented in these words:

"And then shall appear the signs of the truth [of "the personal advent"]; first, the sign of an outspreading in heaven (note 6: "Hitch-

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 382.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

cock and Brown, Schaff and others, prefer 'opening'"); then the sign of the sound of the trumpet; and third, the resurrection of the dead; yet not of all,¹¹ but as it is said: The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him (note 17: "Probably it is based upon the Pauline eschatology"). Then shall the world see the Lord's coming upon the clouds of heaven."¹²

That is all. The treatise ends abruptly, with the Advent expectancy. But it reflects the apostolic teaching in the sub-apostolic age. It fits the pattern—the Apostolic Fathers present life only in Christ for the righteous, or Conditional Immortality, and eternal death for the wicked.

III. Barnabas—Contrasts Eternal Life With Eternal Death

Virtually no scholar ascribes *The Epistle of Barnabas* (c. A.D. 130-c. 140) to the apostle Barnabas, friend and companion of the apostle Paul. Rather, it is credited to another of the same name. The internal evidence has always been conclusively against the older view. The writer was possibly a Jewish Christian of Alexandria, for the Barnabas epistle is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria and by Origen, also of Alexandria, and its tendency to allegorize fits into the Alexandrian scene.¹³

Although the author cannot be identified with any certainty, the epistle itself comes to us from high antiquity. It soon obtained a recognized place, and was read aloud in public worship in some of the early churches, according to Eusebius, who ranks it along with such writings as *The Shepherd* (or *Pastor*) of *Hermas*.¹⁴ Jerome also notes it. So *The Epistle of Barnabas* must be surveyed, since it belongs in the category of the Apostolic Fathers. (See Chart F, page 758, for category and time sequence.)

The first part of the epistle is directed against Judaizing,

¹¹ Glimm adds, "men." S. D. F. Salmond observes: "The resurrection of the dead, which, however, is not of all men, but of the saints" (*Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 596).

¹² *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. 16, in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 382.

¹³ A. H. Newman says, "We cannot avoid the supposition that the epistle was written by a man who had come under the influence of the Alexandrian philosophy, probably of the earlier forms of Gnosticism as well" (*A Manual of Church History*, vol. 1, pp. 221, 222).

¹⁴ Eusebius, *Church History*, book 3, chap. 25, in *NPNF*, vol. 1, p. 156.

and is designed to show the abolition of Judaism by means of the spiritual institutions of Christianity. The writer's grasp of Daniel's outline prophecies, in chapter four of the epistle, is rather remarkable for the time, especially his understanding of Daniel 7—the four world powers, the ten divisions of the fourth empire (Rome), followed by the coming of the "Black One," or lawless one, prior to the Second Advent and imminent day of the Lord.¹⁵ The resurrection, at the Advent, is portrayed as the gateway of the Christian hope and expectation. Thus is revealed the writer's understanding of the order of last events. This hope was subsequently lost through the allegorization of the prophecies, the resurrection, and the Advent, under Origen, as will be seen later.

In the field of our quest it is Barnabas' emphasis on life and death, with the punishment of the wicked depicted as eternal, and his portrayal of the two ways—the way of light and the way of darkness—and their inevitable endings that concern us. This concept of the two ways now becomes the pattern woven all through the remaining writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Let us now trace Barnabas' views in sequence throughout the twenty-one chapters. The phrasing is sometimes involved but the intent is unmistakable.

IV. Coming Destruction of Satan, Sinners, and All Evil

1. BASIC CONTRAST BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.—In chapter one mention is made of "hope for the life which He has promised."¹⁶ In chapter two the admonition appears, "We ought therefore, brethren, carefully to inquire concerning our salvation, lest the wicked one, having made his entrance by deceit, should hurl us forth (note 6: "literally, 'sling us out'") from our [true] life."¹⁷

¹⁵ On Barnabas' interpretation of prophecy, see L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 1, pp. 209-211.

¹⁶ *The Epistle of Barnabas*, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 137. Lightfoot tr., "the life which is to come."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, p. 138. (Brackets in original.)

Chapter five tells of the sufferings and death of Christ, and how God has "not left us without understanding in regard to things which are to come." And Barnabas adds that "the man *perishes justly*, who, having a knowledge of the way of righteousness, rushes off into the *way of darkness*."¹⁸ Then he portrays the part that Christ played in the conflict:

"And He (since it behoved Him to appear in flesh), *that He might abolish death, and reveal the resurrection from the dead*, endured [what and as He did], in order that He might fulfill the promise made unto the fathers, and by preparing a new people for Himself, might show, while He dwelt on earth, that He, when He has raised mankind, will also judge them."¹⁹

But the wicked, he affirms, who "contend" with God and "oppose" Him, "shall all wax old, like a garment, and the moth shall eat you up."²⁰

2. LIFE THROUGH CHRIST; DEATH THROUGH SIN.—Chapter seven (on "Types of Christ") says that Christ, who is also our judge, was stricken that He might give us life:

"If therefore the Son of God, who is Lord [of all things], and who will judge the living and the dead, suffered, that *His stroke might give us life*, let us believe that the Son of God could not have suffered except for our sake."²¹

Chapter eight ("The Red Heifer a Type of Christ") states "that [through the cross] those believing on Him shall *live for ever*."²² And he adds, in chapter nine, "Who is he that wishes to live for ever? By hearing let him hear the voice of my servant."²³ That is man's part. Then in chapter ten, passing to the various precepts and prohibitions of Moses, Barnabas says, "He means, 'Thou shalt not join thyself or be like to such men as are ungodly to the end, and are condemned (note 11: "condemned already") to death.'"²⁴ Next, in chapter eleven, Barnabas speaks of the water of life, the river, and

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 139. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (Parenthesis and brackets in original; italics supplied.)

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 140.

²¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 141. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

²² *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 142. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

²³ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 142.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 143.

the trees whose leaves never fade, and comments, " 'And whosoever shall eat of these shall live for ever.' This meaneth: Whosoever, He declares, shall hear thee [Jesus] speaking, and believe, shall *live for ever*." "Whosoever" is unconditional, but assures immortality for all such as hear and heed. In contrast the ungodly are like the "chaff, which the wind sweeps away from the face of the earth."²⁶ That is the tenor of his paralleling series of contentions.

3. DEATH FROM SIN INVOLVES DESTRUCTION.—In chapter twelve Barnabas states that it was because of Israel's sins that "they were delivered to death." He then tells how, when Moses stretched forth his hands, victory for Israel resulted, but "when again he let down his hands, they were again destroyed." And why? "That they might know that they could not be saved unless they put their trust in Him."²⁶ That was the condition of their salvation—trust in Him, or conditional salvation. Then Barnabas makes this application: "Moses makes a type of Jesus, [signifying] that it was necessary for Him to suffer, [and also] that He would be the *author of life* [to others]."²⁷

That is, Jesus died to save men consigned to death.

4. TWO WAYS: OF "DARKNESS" AND OF "LIGHT."—Coming now to "The Second Part of the Epistle," dealing specifically with "The Two Ways," Barnabas says, in chapter eighteen, that good and evil angels guard the two ways:

"There are two ways of doctrine and authority, the one of light, and the other of darkness. But there is a great difference between these two ways. For over one are stationed the light-bearing angels of God, but over the other the angels of Satan. And He indeed (i.e., God) is Lord *for ever and ever*, but he (i.e., Satan) is prince of *the time of iniquity*."²⁸

Here time and eternity are placed in antithesis—the eternal God, in contrast with Satan, who is limited to "the time of iniquity" that will end.

Next, in chapter nineteen ("The Way of Light") Bar-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, p. 144. (Italics supplied.)

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 12, pp. 144, 145.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 145. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, p. 148. (Italics supplied.)

nabas warns, "Thou shalt not join thyself to those who walk in the way of death,"²⁹ or darkness. And in chapter twenty ("The Way of Darkness") he declares such a path to be the "way of eternal death." Note the exact phrasing:

"But the way of darkness is crooked, and full of cursing;³⁰ for it is the way of *eternal death* with punishment, in which way are the things that destroy the soul."³¹

He proceeds to enumerate these "things."

Dr. Petavel well comments:

"It should be observed that when the word *eternal* qualifies an act, the eternity is the attribute not of the act itself, but of the result of the act. It then denotes the perpetuity of the effect produced by the act or by the agent."³²

5. "ETERNAL DEATH": SYNONYM FOR SECOND DEATH.—The phrase "eternal death" appears in chapter twenty for the first time as a synonym for the second and definitive death. It is "eternal death with punishment." Here distinction is to be made between punishment by *deprivation of life* and mere punishment by pain through the senses. "Eternal death with punishment" (*meta timōrias*) obviously involves an infliction of suffering preceding death, and the end of being. And this statement by Barnabas is immediately followed by the conclusion, in chapter twenty-one, which opens with:

"It is well, therefore, that he who has learned the judgments of the Lord, as many as have been written, should walk in them. For he who keepeth these shall be glorified in the kingdom of God; but he who chooseth other things [condemned in the previous chapter] shall be *destroyed [apoleitai] with his works*. On this account there will be a resurrection, on this account a retribution."³³

To perish with his works is clearly to exist no more. The *works* are destroyed by coming to an end. Thus also with the *worker* of iniquity.³⁴

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 148.

³⁰ Glimm's tr., "accursed."

³¹ *The Epistle to Barnabas*, chap. 20, p. 149.

³² Petavel, *The Problem of Immortality*, p. 194.

³³ *The Epistle of Barnabas*, chap. 21, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 149. (Italics supplied.)

³⁴ "The strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them" (Isa. 1:31).

6. TO "PERISH" IS TO EXIST NO MORE.—Following this declaration of destruction Barnabas immediately declares: "For the day is at hand on which all things shall *perish with the evil* [one]. The Lord is near, and His reward."³⁵

Satan, sinners, and all things will then be destroyed together. So Barnabas appropriately admonishes: "And be ye taught of God, inquiring diligently what the Lord asks from you; and do it that ye may be safe in the day of judgment."³⁶

V. Eight Logical and Inescapable Conclusions to Be Deduced

That is the total testimony of Barnabas, witness of the faith of the church at this early period. This survey has covered the passages relating to our quest. Here follows a series of logical conclusions deduced from the foregoing evidence, both as to clear affirmation and significant omission.

1. In the entire epistle Barnabas does not once hint, either by phrase or thought, that man has an innately immortal soul.

2. He never once states or infers anything about endless suffering or torment for the wicked. On the contrary, they are to die, perish, be destroyed, be blown away as the chaff, and eaten as by moths.

3. He speaks of the sleep of the dead, the coming of the Lord, the resurrection and endless life of the righteous, and definitive retribution of the wicked. Even Dr. Edward Beecher, the restorationist, grudgingly admits that "what he [Barnabas] says may be understood of the annihilation of the wicked."³⁷

4. Barnabas speaks of "life"—the hope of the "life which is to come"—and of *some* who "shall live for ever," i.e., such as "hear the voice of my servant," and of Satan depriving others of that life.

5. "Death" for the unrepentant sinner is a "punishment"

³⁵ *Ibid.* (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Beecher, *History of Opinions*, p. 281.

that is eternal—equivalent to the “destruction” of the soul. By “destroy” he expressly meant to die, to perish, to bring to an end—hence “eternal death.”

6. As the sinner is “destroyed together with his *works*,” which definitely come to an end, so the sinner also comes to an end, after appropriate punishment ceasing to be.

7. Satan, the wicked one and prince of evil, is to be destroyed along with “all things” evil. But Satan is set forth as existing only for a “time,” the “time of iniquity.” In contrast with the Lord, who is from “*everlasting to everlasting*,” Satan is simply “the prince” of this passing world of time.

8. Thus the ungodly not only “perish” but “justly perish,” whereas the righteous will be eternally saved and glorified by the resurrection at the coming of the Lord, when they will receive incorruptibility.

Such was the Conditional Immortality voiced by Barnabas.

Immortality a Gift; Death Is Utter Destruction

Hermas—Portrays Issues of Eternal Life and Utter Destruction

Next in probable order of time comes *The Shepherd* (or *Pastor*) of *Hermas* (c. A.D. 154),¹ a popular collection of allegorical instructions—five so-called visions, twelve commandments, and ten similitudes, or parables, that were in circulation in the second, third, and fourth centuries. It is first mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment (c. A.D. 170) as written “very recently in our times,” and is noted by various Ante- and Post-Nicene church writers. More than that, it was read in public worship in the churches.² Originally written in Greek, it was soon translated into Latin and Ethiopic, and is included in the Codex Sinaiticus.

The Pastor of Hermas was the initial effort at Christian allegory, and occupies a position similar to that of Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* in modern times. It contains little dogmatic teaching, but throws light on the then-current beliefs of the church. Hermas also touches on prophecy, alluding to the coming conflict between a persecuting beast and a woman in white, symbolic of the church—evidently patterned after Revelation 12.³ He warns of coming tribulation for the church, and gives assurance of ultimate victory.

¹ “Introductory Note to *The Pastor of Hermas*,” in *ANF*, vol. 2, pp. 3-8. Goodspeed places it around 100.

² Eusebius, *Church History*, chap. 3, in *NPNF*, vol. 1, p. 135.

³ On Hermas’ interpretation of prophecy see L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 1, pp. 213, 214.

The writer likens the growth and perfection of the church to the building of a tower, with stones of character. And he adds, "When the tower is finished and built, then comes the end." Following that is the coming world for the righteous, with destruction for the incorrigible sinner. Such, in a word, is the eschatology of Hermas. (See Table F, on page 758, for chronological placement and grouping.)

I. Two Destinations Portrayed in Multiple Forms

The treatise is distinctive in form and content. From beginning to end the "way of life" and the "way of death" are placed in paralleling contrast—the righteous living unto God and destined to eternal life, or life in the world to come; and the sinner doomed to death, loss of life, utter destruction, with God having power to save or destroy. We will follow the witness of Hermas through the three curious categories—visions, commandments, and similitudes—on the issues of life and death. First come the visions,⁴ stressing not only the proffered life but the utter destruction for the unrepentant sinner.

1. ETERNAL LIFE AND ETERNAL DESTRUCTION.—In Vision Second, Hermas launches the continuing contrast. Wickedness, evil, and wrong "worketh *death*," whereas those who are "saved" will "abide unto *eternal life*." He adds, "Blessed are all they who practise righteousness, for they shall *never be destroyed*."⁵ Those are the basic contrasts—eternal life and utter destruction. The pattern varies, but not the principle and the outcome. The emphasis all the way through is on life—life in Christ, resurrected life, eternal life.

2. PAST SAINTS HAVE "FALLEN ASLEEP."—In Vision Third ("Concerning the Building of the Triumphant Church"),

⁴ Eusebius states that the Pentecostal prophetic gift was not considered as extinct, but had a mission to rebuke carnality and worldliness. Some invoked Paul's statement "Despise not prophesyings; prove all things."

⁵ *The Pastor of Hermas, Vision 2, chap. 3, in ANF, vol. 2, p. 12. (Italics supplied.)*

Hermas portrays a great tower, with Christians as the component stones, and the unfit cast out permanently, unless reclaimed by repentance. The polished "square white stones, which fitted exactly into each other," are Christian leaders—"apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons." Some of them, he says, have "*fallen asleep*, and some still remain alive."⁶

After describing those rough, crooked, ill-shaped stones that were "cast far away," as not fit for the building,⁷ Hermas asserts that nevertheless all the faithful will inherit eternal life.⁸ And when the tower is "finished, there will not be more room for any one, but he will be rejected."⁹ Then the unrepentant hypocrites and sons of iniquity that "cannot be used" are cut off and "cast far away."¹⁰ Finally, he declares, "When the tower is finished and built, then comes the end." And he adds, "I assure you it will be soon finished."¹¹

Some profess to see in this the germ of the doctrine of Purgatory, or claim that it teaches restoration for penitents in the nether world, by means of "remedial punishment." But that is not the case—as the repentance is for those in this life, who are *not yet* cast into the fire as finally impenitent. It therefore refers only to this life. Repentance and delivery from punishment are possible, *but only in this life*.

3. PERSECUTION AND TRIUMPH OF CHURCH SYMBOLIZED.—

Like the other Apostolic Fathers, Hermas similarly touches on prophecy. In Vision Fourth ("Concerning the Trial and Tribulation That Are to Come Upon Men"), Hermas pictures a symbolic "representation of the tribulation that is to come." He sees a "monstrous beast," noisy and powerful, stirring up a terrific dust. Fiery locusts issue from its mouth.¹² Next, Hermas sees a woman "clothed entirely in white," which represents the "church."¹³ This beast, Hermas says, portrays the "great tribulation that is to come."¹⁴

⁶ *Ibid.*, Vision 3, chap. 5, p. 14. (Italics supplied.)

⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 16.

¹² *Ibid.*, Vision 4, chap. 1, pp. 17, 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, p. 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 18.

Hermas is curious as to the colors he has seen. It is explained that the black stands for the present world, "the world in which we dwell." The "fiery and bloody points out that the world must perish through blood and fire." But the white is "*the age that is to come*, in which the elect of God will dwell," who are "elected by God to *eternal life*."¹⁶ All this was part of the curious symbolism of the tribulation and triumph—and eternal life.

4. **RIGHTEOUS HAVE LIFE; WICKED NO LIFE.**—In "Book Second.—Commandments," after admonishing all to have faith in God, Hermas assures us that if we have faith in Him and keep His precepts, we shall "obtain life."¹⁷ On the contrary, he that doeth wickedly "works death for himself."¹⁷ And he repeats, that if we "hear and keep" His commandments we shall "live to God,"¹⁸ live in the world to come. Then comes the climactic statement:

"They only who fear the Lord and keep His commandments have *life with God*;¹⁹ but as to those who keep not His commandments, *there is no life in them*."²⁰

Hermas clearly does *not* hold to inherent, indefeasible immortality for the wicked.

5. **WICKED ARE TO PERISH AT LAST.**—Again, in Commandment Twelfth, Hermas thrice warns against "wicked desire," declaring it is "wild, and is with difficulty tamed." He contends it is ruinous, destructive. It "consumes" those who are not of "good desire," and are "entangled" with "this world." "These it delivers up to death" and "slays" even "the servants of God."²¹ He declares that those who "are mastered" by evil desires "will perish at last," because these desires are "fatal."²² And finally he admonishes us to "fear Him who has all power,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Commandments 1, 3, in *ANF*, vol. 2, pp. 20, 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Commandment 4, chap. 1, p. 21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, p. 22.

¹⁹ Dressel tr., "shall live for ever."

²⁰ Hermas, Commandment 7, p. 25.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Commandment 12, chap. 1, p. 28.

²² *Ibid.*, chap. 2, p. 28.

both to save and destroy, and keep His commandments, and ye will live to God."²³

6. RIGHTEOUS IN LIFE TO COME; WICKED CONSUMED.—“Book Third.—Similitudes” is largely illustrations or parables, such as the lesson of the trees, the tower, et cetera. In Similitude Third, in “Winter Green Trees Cannot Be Distinguished From Withered,” leafless trees. So in this world the just cannot always be distinguished from the unjust, for they may look much alike here. But in the summer “Living Trees Are Distinguished From Withered by Fruit and Living Leaves.” The shepherd told him that “‘Those’ . . . ‘which are budding are the righteous who are to live in the world to come.’”²⁴ Thus the “fruits of the righteous” are manifest.

But the unfruitful sinners, like the “withered trees, . . . shall be burnt as wood.” The “sinners shall be consumed because they sinned and did not repent,” and likewise the heathen who “knew not Him who created them.” But if we “serve Him” we shall “bear fruit for the life to come.”²⁵ And in Similitude Fifth he adds that we are to keep the flesh “pure and stainless,” for “if you defile your flesh” you will “not live.”²⁶ Burning here certainly denotes suffering, but not endless suffering.

7. WICKED DESTINED TO EVERLASTING RUIN.—Similitude Sixth touches on voluptuousness that brings death and corruption. Those with whom there is “no return to life through repentance” only add to their sins and blaspheme the name of the Lord. Such “are appointed unto death.” They have been “perverted from the truth.” But even among those steeped in corruption there is “hope of repentance, by which it is possible to live.” Thus again the contrasts are brought into view—a hope of “renewal” for some; but for others “death has everlasting ruin.”²⁷ There are punishments and tortures

²³ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Similitude 4, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 33. (Italics supplied.)

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Similitude 5, chap. 7, p. 36.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Similitude 6, chap. 2, p. 37.

for sin, but he is describing "tortures *such as occur during life.*" And of such as respond to God's overtures, he says, "For the rest of the days of their life they are subject to the Lord with pure hearts."²⁸ This is all *during life*, and before death. No probation after death is here offered, as some have professed to see.

8. PUNISHMENT IS PROPORTIONATE TO SIN.—As to the duration of the punishment of the wicked, in chapter four Hermas asked the tall shepherd whether those who engage in sin are "tortured for the same period of time that they have indulged in luxury and deceit."²⁹ And the answer is, Longer—the time of indulgence is short, but that of punishment is long. But that neither involves nor implies endless suffering. Having life, they gave themselves "over to death"; and the warning is "If they continue in them, and do not repent, they bring death upon themselves."³⁰

And in Similitude Eighth, under the simile of a tree and withered branches, he adds that "repentance involves life to sinners, but non-repentance death."³¹ Among the repentant, then, is found the "life of the Lord," but among "transgressors, death."³² Such half-withered branches "lost their lives through the wickedness which they committed."³³

9. INCORRIGIBLY WICKED "DIE FOR EVER."—The parable of the tower is again referred to, in Similitude Ninth. The tower is "the Church,"³⁴ "founded on the word of the almighty and glorious Name, and it is kept together by the invisible power of the Lord."³⁵ That tower "will be finished." Hermas' former recital of the used and rejected stones will be recalled. Hermas now adds that those "who have known God, and have seen His mighty works, and still continue on in evil, shall be chastised doubly, and shall die for ever."³⁶

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 37.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 38.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Similitude 9, chap. 13, p. 48; cf. Vision 3, chap. 3, p. 13.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vision 3, chap. 3, p. 14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Similitude 9, chap. 18, p. 50.

³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 41.

³² *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 42.

³³ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 42.

10. CONCLUSIONS FROM NOTABLE SILENCES IN HERMAS.—Such is the testimony of *The Shepherd of Hermas* on the nature of man—with *life* as the reward of repentance and obedience, and *death* as the punishment for sin. There is no hint of consciousness between death and the resurrection—rather, man “sleeps.” There is not, however, complete constancy. There is nothing of the soul going to Heaven or Hell at death. Instead, that concept does not appear in Christian literature for another fifty years. There is nothing of Eternal Torment of the damned—only utter destruction after just retribution in proportion to transgression.

There is nothing of an immortal soul or any undying spirit—neither of those terms or concepts had as yet been introduced into Christian literature. Hermas believed expressly in the mortality of man, the sleep of the dead, immortality as the gift of God for the righteous, and that utter, final, and irrevocable destruction is the lot of the unrepentant wicked—a death in which there is no life, or return to life.

II. Polycarp—Resurrection Is Immortality's Sole Gateway

Soon after the middle of the second century the series of Apostolic Fathers ends with the venerable POLYCARP (d. A.D. 155), martyred bishop of Smyrna. According to Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Eusebius, he was a disciple of the apostle John and also the teacher of the noted Irenaeus. Under Marcus Antoninus a storm of persecution broke out in Smyrna, which, swelling into a tempest, engulfed Polycarp in the seventh year of the emperor's reign. His last prayer at the stake, as he was burned for his faith, is recorded by Eusebius. It tells of his unwavering belief in the resurrection of the soul, as well as of the body.

Of Polycarp's personal life little is known. Irenaeus states that he not only was a disciple of John but was acquainted with many who knew Christ. Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna when Ignatius was bishop of Antioch. It was from him that

Polycarp had received a letter shortly before he was to suffer death at Rome. And during his brief sojourn in Rome, Polycarp bore witness to the apostolic doctrine, and attempted to stay the encroaching heresies.

Of various letters written by Polycarp only one has been preserved—his short *Epistle to the Philippians*. The church at Philippi was the first of the European churches to be founded, and was greatly beloved by Paul. This epistle is acknowledged by all as authentic, both from external and internal evidence.³⁷ A major portion of it was incorporated by Eusebius in his *Church History*.³⁸ In Jerome's time Polycarp was publicly read in some of the churches.

III. Conditional Resurrection the Determining Factor

The entire epistle, which is interwoven with references to more New Testament writings than any other work of this early age, has been preserved only in Latin. The Greek text ends in chapter nine. The letter is not primarily doctrinal, but is a general exhortation to godliness in all the relationships of life. Polycarp speaks in general terms of the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, emphasizing redemption only through Christ and stressing the resurrection from the dead at the Second Advent and the subsequent reigning of the saints with Christ.

Polycarp felt strongly that denial of the incarnation is "of the devil." More than that, Polycarp declares that he who says "there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan."³⁹ But, severe though his strictures were, there is nowhere any intimation either of belief in the eternal suffering of the lost or of Restorationism—neither of which innovation was introduced until three quarters of a century after the death of this last of the Apostolic Fathers.

³⁷ See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 3, chap. 3, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 416; Eusebius, *Church History*, book 4, chap. 14, in *NPNE*, 2d series, vol. 1, pp. 187, 188.

³⁸ Eusebius, *op. cit.*, book 4, chap. 15.

³⁹ *The Epistle of Polycarp*, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 34.

1. **IGNATIUS' ADMONITIONS REGARDING IMMORTALITY.**—It is to be remembered that Polycarp was the recipient of an epistle from his fellow bishop Ignatius of Antioch—likewise a believer in Conditional Immortality—reminding Polycarp that he is, as it were, an “athlete of God,” striving for the “prize set before thee” of “immortality and eternal life.”⁴⁰ Then he urges Polycarp to remember his oneness with his fellow laborers in the gospel, listing five features in which they are to maintain their unity:

“Labour together with one another; strive in company together; run together; suffer together; sleep together [in death]; and awake together [in the resurrection], as the stewards, and associates, and servants of God.”⁴¹

That is clear—sleeping in death until awakened on the resurrection morn by the Life-giver.

Polycarp's own testimony may well be read in the light of Bishop Ignatius' admonitions, to which he subscribed. They were obviously at one in belief as to the nature and destiny of man. Though fragmentary, these many parts present a rather clear over-all picture.

2. **RESURRECTION PIVOTAL IN MAN'S FUTURE.**—In Polycarp's own view the resurrection was pivotal in relation to the future destiny of man. In chapter two of his *Epistle to the Philippians*, after urging belief in our Lord Jesus Christ, who was Himself raised from the dead, glorified, and enthroned in the heavens, Polycarp tells of His second advent—and with it of our own consequent resurrection:

“He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead. His blood will God require of those who do not believe in Him. But He who raised Him up from the dead *will raise up us also*, if we do His will and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved.”⁴²

The crucial “if” makes it conditional, and the condition is clearly declared.

⁴⁰ *Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp*, chap. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 94.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 95.

⁴² *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, chap. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 33. (Italics supplied.)

3. SOLE BASIS OF HOPE FOR "FUTURE WORLD."—The relationship of the resurrection to our reign with Christ in the "future world," conditioned on our relationship to Him in this "present world," is presented in chapter five:

"If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live worthily of Him, 'we shall also reign together with Him' [2 Tim. 2:12]." ⁴³

The repetition of the "if" clearly indicates emphasis on the concept of *conditional resurrection* at the time of the Second Advent. This constitutes the very essence of Conditionalism. Only the righteous come forth at the resurrection of the just. Not all are saved. Not all have incorruption conferred upon them. Not all have a part in the "future world." That is for the righteous alone. Polycarp does not here deal with the eventual resurrection of the wicked.

4. STRICTURES ON DENIERS OF THE RESURRECTION.—Polycarp's only reference to the prophesied "antichrist" (1 John 4:3) appears in chapter seven in connection with a denial of the resurrection, where he uses severe strictures in describing such perverters of the gospel. Warning of the dangers of the time he says:

"For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the [suffering on the] cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan." ⁴⁴

But there is no consignment to Eternal Torment. Such are the teachings of the last of the Apostolic Fathers, pressing insistently on the literal resurrection, soon to come under attack. Possibly in studying the current trends, Polycarp had a premonition of coming departures.

5. RESURRECTION "BOTH OF SOUL AND BODY."—In addition, we should note the references in *The Epistle Concerning*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 34. (Italics supplied.)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 34.

the Martyrdom of Polycarp, sent forth from the church at Smyrna, one of the seven churches of Asia Minor, to Philomelium (Phrygia). It is generally regarded as authentic, though there are certain extravagant apocryphal supplements appended at the close. This epistle gives a firsthand account of the circumstances attending the martyrdom of Polycarp, and is evidently the earliest of the martyrologies. The authentic main portion is also preserved by Eusebius as the oldest record of a martyrdom that he knew. The prayer of Polycarp at the stake is pertinent to our quest. His dying belief and hope in the resurrection is again stressed, with a unique emphasis. Here are his words, after referring to "the righteous who live before Thee":

"O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, . . . I give Thee thanks that Thou hast counted me worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, *to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body*, through the incorruption [imparted] by the Holy Ghost.'" ⁴⁵

He clearly linked the resurrection of both soul and body with the resurrection unto eternal life.

6. NO ALLUSION TO ETERNAL TORMENT.—In the Smyrnæan epistle reference is made to Polycarp's "blameless life," and to his being "crowned with the wreath of immortality," ⁴⁶ and having by patience "overcome the unjust governor, and thus acquired the crown of immortality." ⁴⁷ The epistle contains this allusion to the destiny of the wicked in quoting Polycarp's reply to the proconsul:

"But Polycarp said [to the proconsul], 'Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punish-

⁴⁵ *The Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrna Concerning the Martyrdom of the Holy Polycarp*, chap. 14, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 42. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.) Eusebius' version reads, "in the immortality of the Holy Spirit" (*Church History*, book 4, chap. 15, in *NPNF*, 2d series, vol. 1, p. 191). Climm reads, "in the incorruptibility of the Holy Ghost" (*The Apostolic Fathers, in The Fathers of the Church* series, p. 158).

⁴⁶ *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, chap. 17, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 42.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 43.

ment, reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt."⁴⁸

So he went to his death. But there is not a word about Eternal Torment. He never intimates the endless existence of the lost in eternal suffering. Eternal punishment is not eternal *punishing*. That is the testimony of Polycarp.

IV. *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*—"Immortal Soul" and "Eternal Fire" Problems

At this point note must be taken of pertinent statements in the not too well known *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus* (c. A.D. 130). Some place it in the early third century. Moehler called it a "brilliant gem of Christian antiquity." It was an answer from an unidentified Christian—who was a master of Greek style—to an inquiry from the distinguished pagan Diognetus, believed by some to have been the tutor of Marcus Aurelius.⁴⁹ Diognetus had asked a series of questions: What God do the Christians trust in? Why do they "despise death"? What is the explanation of their mutual love? What is their mode of worship, and what is the difference between Christian beliefs and those of the Greeks and Jews?⁵⁰

This epistle may be considered a connecting link between the shorter exhortations of the Apostolic Fathers and the elaborate apologies of Justin Martyr and his successors. It was at one time wrongly attributed to Justin. It emphasizes godly living rather than dogmatic beliefs. Yet it combats with vigor the twin errors of the Jews and the Greeks, and shows familiarity with Pauline and Johannine teachings. It is believed to have been written in the mid-second century, and is therefore placed at the close of the line of Apostolic Fathers. (See Tabular Chart F, on page 758.)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, p. 41. It should be noted that this statement is received at fourth hand, according to Cave (*Life of Polycarp*, chap. 6)—through Euaristus, Caius, Socrates, and Pionius, and is therefore none too trustworthy as to exact phrasing.

⁴⁹ See Christian Charles Bunsen, *Hippolytus and His Age*, vol. 1, p. 188; also William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.

⁵⁰ *The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 25.

Mathetes' well-phrased answer—which might well have sufficed for a formal written defense presented to a judge—comprises ten chapters, plus two at the close recognized by all as a later spurious appendage. It is an earnest vindication of Christianity, a book of Christian evidences. In chapter two it portrays the vanity of worshiping idols, which are deaf, blind, insensible, without life or locomotion—and are *corruptible*. Then in chapter three the writer discusses the sacrifices of the Jews, and the Creator, “who stands in need of nothing.” Their meats, ceremonial sabbaths and new moons, and circumcision are now useless.⁶¹

1. PUT TO DEATH; RESTORED THROUGH RESURRECTION.—Chapter five deals with the paradoxical life of the Christians. As do other citizens, they dwell in their native lands, yet are “foreigners” and “sojourners.” They are regarded as aliens by the Jews, and are persecuted by the pagans. But there is no marked difference.

“They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the law by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and *restored to life.*”⁶²

This restoration, or coming to life, refers, of course, to the resurrection at the last day. And Mathetes adds, “When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life.”⁶³ The blessed hope of the Second Advent was ever before them.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOUL AND BODY.—In chapter six Mathetes puts “The Relation of Christians to the World” in this way:

“What the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, chaps. 3, 4, p. 26.

⁶² *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 27. (*Italics supplied.*)

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 27.

Then he adds, "The flesh [the world] hates the soul [the Christians], and wars against it." Nevertheless, "the soul loves the flesh that hates it."⁶⁵ That is why the Christians, although they are punished through persecution, "increase in number daily."⁶⁶

3. FIRST USE OF "IMMORTAL SOUL" IN CHRISTIAN WRITINGS.—And now follows apparently the first use of the expression "immortal soul" in a Christian work. It is, however, used in a *conditional sense*; otherwise it would be in conflict with other clear statements in the same treatise. According to two scholarly investigators, Dr. Emmanuel Petavel, of the University of Lausanne, and Prof. Charles F. Hudson, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, this is, indeed, the first use in any early Christian work of the phrase "immortal soul."⁶⁷ Here is the statement, continuing the figure of soul and body:

"The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle; and Christians dwell as sojourners in corruptible [bodies], looking for an incorruptible dwelling (note 10: "literally, 'incorruption'"), in the heavens."⁶⁸

4. CHRIST SENT AS "GOD" AND "SAVIOUR"; COMES LATER AS JUDGE.—In chapter seven ("The Manifestation of Christ") Mathetes tells how God sent not an angel or other emissary to this earth, but sent as His Messenger the "very Creator and Fashioner of all things." He came not to inspire "terror" but to proclaim "clemency." The Father sent Christ "as a king sends his son," as a Saviour, "seeking to persuade, not to compel." He came not as a judge. But Mathetes adds, "He will yet send Him to judge us, and who shall endure His appearing?"⁶⁹ Thus the solemnity of the Second Advent is introduced.

5. EVERY BLESSING CONFERRED THROUGH CHRIST.—In chapter eight ("The Miserable State of Men Before the Coming of the Word"), after touching on the "vain and silly

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, note 11.

⁶⁷ Petavel, *The Problem of Immortality*, p. 236, note 5; see also C. F. Hudson, *Debt and Grace as Related to the Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 298.

⁶⁸ *The Epistle to Diognetus*, chap. 6, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 27. (Brackets in original.)

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 27.

doctrines" of the "philosophers," Mathetes tells how the true and living God, the "friend of mankind," sent all blessings in Christ:

"He revealed and laid open, through His beloved Son, the things which had been prepared from the beginning. He conferred every blessing (note 5: "literally, 'all things'"), all at once upon us, so that we should both share in His benefits, and see and be active [in His service]." ⁰⁰

6. CHRIST, INCORRUPTIBLE AND IMMORTAL; MAN, CORRUPTIBLE AND MORTAL.—Discussing, in chapter nine, "Why the Son Was Sent So Late," Mathetes says that God sought to convince mankind "of our [man's] unworthiness of attaining *life* through our own works." Life must come through the "kindness of God." Christ came to make "manifest" that "in ourselves we were unable to enter into the kingdom of God," but that "we might through the power of God be made able." ⁰¹ When "wickedness had reached its height," its "reward" became clearly revealed as "punishment and death." Then, in this connection we are declared *corruptible* and *mortal*, and lost without Christ. Here is his comprehensive description of praise, contrasting the immortal Christ:

"He Himself took on Him the burden of our iniquities, He gave His own Son as a ransom for us, the holy One for transgressors, the blameless One for the wicked, the righteous One for the unrighteous, *the incorruptible One for the corruptible, the immortal One for them that are mortal.* For what other thing was capable of covering our sins than His righteousness? By what other one was it possible that we, the wicked and ungodly, could be justified, than by the only Son of God? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable operation! O benefits surpassing all expectation! that the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors!" ⁰²

Thus man became "convinced . . . that our nature was *unable to attain to life,*" and the Saviour was revealed as the only One "who is able to save." And so God leads us "to esteem Him [Christ] our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Healer,

⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 28. (Brackets in original.)

⁰¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 28. (Italics supplied.)

⁰² *Ibid.*

our Wisdom, Light, Honour, Glory, Power, and *Life*.”⁶³ He is the source of our life and immortality.

7. ETERNAL FIRE; BOTH A PROCESS AND A TERMINATION.—Continuing the theme in chapter ten (“The Blessings That Will Flow From Faith”), Mathetes declares that God “made the world” for man, whom He loved, and gave him “reason and understanding,” imparting the privilege of looking upward to God, and promising him a “kingdom in heaven,” which He will give “to those who have loved Him.” Mathetes then says that when we see the “deceit and error of the world” and “suffer punishment,” we while still on earth shall “know what it is to live truly in heaven.” And now comes his key statement on the destruction of the wicked by eternal fire:

“Thou shalt despise that which is here esteemed to be death, when thou shalt fear what is *truly* death, which is reserved for those who shall be condemned to the eternal fire, which shall afflict those *even to the end* that are committed to it. Then shalt thou admire those who for righteousness’ sake endure the fire that is but for a moment, and shalt count them happy when thou shalt know [the nature of] *that* fire.”⁶⁴

Hudson observes, “This cannot denote the common view of punishment without end.” Rather, it means the fire that “will exterminate.”⁶⁵ Mathetes evidently believed in the consistency of two ideas that are often held to be incompatible—the thought of “eternal fire” as a *punishment*, and the thought of that punishment’s ultimately having an “*end*.” The difference lies between the expression “even to the end,” or *until* the end, and that which would be *without an end*—a condition that Mathetes neither states nor implies. Here a work of inexorable destruction is portrayed, and its final result. To Mathetes, “destroy” obviously indicates both a *process* and a *termination*. Mathetes adds that those who are martyred here “endure the fire that is but for a moment,” in contrast with

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 29. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

Hudson’s translation reads: “‘When thou canst despise that which *appeareth* to be death here; when thou drest that which *really* is death, a death which is kept in store for those who will be condemned to that eternal fire which will punish *unto the end* [*mechri telous*] those whom it receiveth’” (*Debt and Grace*, p. 299. Italics supplied).

⁶⁵ Hudson, *op. cit.*, p. 299, note 1.

the fire that is for the wicked,⁶⁶ and which ends in their destruction.

That is all, and that is his climax. The witness is fragmentary, but it is clearly indicative of Mathetes' continuance of the Apostolic Fathers' positions.

V. Summarizing Conclusion Concerning the Apostolic Fathers

It has often been asserted that the dogma of the Innate Immortality of the soul and the Eternal Torment of the wicked, as later taught by Tertullian and finally established by Augustine, was *always* the position of the Early Christian Church. But the scholarly investigations of Henry Constable, Anglican Prebendary of Cork, Ireland, led him to reply with positiveness, "We wholly deny it." And after his exhaustive study of the Apostolic Fathers, Constable declared that they were just as much opposed to the everlasting-torment theories of Augustine as to the theories of Origen and his universal-restoration concept. Here is the key statement of Constable's sweeping conclusion:

"From beginning to end of them [the Apostolic Fathers] there is not one word said of that immortality of the soul which is so prominent in the writings of the later fathers. Immortality is by them asserted to be peculiar to the redeemed. The punishment of the wicked is by them emphatically declared to be everlasting. Not one stray expression of theirs can be interpreted as giving any countenance to the theory of restoration after purgatorial suffering. The fire of hell is with them, as with us, an unquenchable one; but its issue is, with them as with Scripture, 'destruction,' 'death,' 'loss of life.'" ⁶⁷

Constable even went so far as to issue this challenge to his contemporaries, which appears in each of the six editions of his major treatise, "We challenge our opponents to controvert our view of them in a single particular."⁶⁸ And it should be added that no one during his lifetime, when discussion over the question was rife, ever undertook to disprove his contention.

⁶⁶ *The Epistle to Diognetus*, chap. 10, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 29.

⁶⁷ Constable, *The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, p. 167.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

On the point of the total destruction of the wicked, Constable's general conclusion, based on thorough research, and covering the Apostolic Fathers as a whole, is:

"Every one of the men who were contemporaries of the apostles, and have left to our time any of their writings, agree with our view of future punishment as consisting in the destruction of the ungodly, their becoming as a thing of nought."⁶⁹

In similar vein is the testimony of the scholarly Dr. Petavel:

"The apostolic Fathers never speak of a native immortality; an immortal life is in their view the exclusive privilege of the redeemed. The punishment of the rejected consists in a gradual destruction of their being, which finally becomes total. This punishment is called eternal, as being definitive and irremediable; we have already shown in the Scripture this use of an adjective, qualifying not the momentary action but the permanent results of the action. Neither do the apostolic Fathers speak of a universal salvation; they teach that the unquenchable fire will consume its victims; in a word, they all with one accord appear to be Conditionalists."⁷⁰

With the findings of these two specialists the findings of our own independent researches are in complete accord.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁷⁰ Petavel, *op. cit.*, pp. 229, 230.

Justin Martyr Augments Subapostolic Conditionalism

I. Ante-Nicene Period Infiltrated by Platonic Immortal-Soulism

As already noted, the earliest literature of the Apostolic Fathers will be searched in vain for the telltale phrases of the Neoplatonic dogma—"immortal soul," "eternal spirit," "eternal suffering," and such—that now begin to appear with increasing frequency in this new ante-Nicene period. The Apostolic Fathers were all Conditionalists, as also were Justin Martyr of Samaria, Tatian of Assyria, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, Novatian of Rome, Arnobius of Sicca, and evidently others of the crucial era we are now entering. These likewise maintained the postulate that man is mortal, with Immortality as a gift from God for the righteous only.

1. **FRONTAL AND FLANKING ATTACKS DEVELOP.**—The ante-Nicene period extends from Justin Martyr, about A.D. 150 on to A.D. 325, the date of the Nicene General Council. This was the period of the phenomenal spread of Christianity throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia Minor, and its inevitable struggle with Judaism and heathenism—and all this amid persecutions by the Roman state. It was a crisis hour for the church, a time of transition in which grave perversions began to appear.

Vicious *frontal* attacks upon Christianity and the Scriptures were made by Celsus and others. These called forth the vigorous defensive literature of church leaders—apologies frequently addressed to the emperors. During this period a host of martyrs were put to death in one of the most moving

spectacles of Christian heroism of the centuries. However, ere-long veneration for their noble sacrifice degenerated into worship of saints and reliance on relics purporting to have meritorious value. And in time the exaltation of the clergy was followed by the development of a dominating episcopate.

But far more serious to Christian beliefs were the inroads made by the *flanking* attacks of mystical philosophy. As heresies began to appear, controversies inevitably developed with those trained in the schools of Athens or Alexandria. Curiously enough, the arguments of philosophy were first brought forward ostensibly that men might not be blinded by the sudden light of Scripture.¹ Various writers began to stress variant viewpoints, differing from all others. Doctrinal beliefs had not yet been crystallized, and there was diversity of view, with liberty of conviction accorded those who differed.

2. GNOSTICISM UNDERMINES TEACHING OF RESURRECTION.—During this time Gnosticism, a far-flung religio-philosophical movement, came into prominence, followed by the Manichæan philosophy. The apostle Paul had warned against *gnōsis* (knowledge), falsely so-called (1 Tim. 6:20). The Gnostics drew their speculations from a mingling of Oriental paganism, Alexandrian philosophy, and Christian sources. They sought to construct a theory of the universe, with ultimate harmony restored by destruction of all matter. They claimed a secret knowledge inaccessible to the uninitiated. It was a mystic religion, seeking assurance of a fortunate destiny for the soul after death. They segregated men into three classes—the third group being wholly material, and thus beyond salvation, because they had no spark of the “divine” within them.

It was based largely on an Oriental Dualism, with the two antagonistic worlds of good and evil, light and darkness, divine and material—the material being the seat of evil. It taught a series of emanations from the Supreme Being, which

¹ B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 63-65.

were half angelic and half demonic. And it was strongly influenced by Greek Platonism.

Thus "Christian" Gnosticism sought to combine the teachings of the historical Jesus with "enlightenment" derived from heathen poets and philosophers. But the essence of the Gnostic notion of redemption was liberation of the spirit from its connection with matter, thus affecting the whole concept of the resurrection. The Gnostics did not attempt to form a separate ecclesiastical organization, but penetrated into existing church circles. And the peak of Gnosticism was reached in the latter part of the second century.

3. NEOPLATONIC MYSTICISM SUPPLANTS LITERALISM.—While the early successors of the apostles gave clear expression to the apostolic hope and expectation—the literal second coming of Christ, accompanied by the literal resurrection of the dead—Greek concepts regarding human survival and inherent immortality now began to intrude into certain patristic writings. Indeed, the subtle sophistries that made the Innate Immortality of the soul the central feature of Greek thought, made steady encroachment upon the church until under Origen, the Neoplatonic philosopher of Alexandria, it triumphed in open subversion of the literal second coming of Christ and of the literal resurrection of the dead cherished by the apostles. This is clearly stated by Dr. John Laidlaw, in his Cunningham Lecture, at the Free Church College of Edinburgh, in 1877:

"Gradually, in Christian schools, the Greek influence prevailed, and even in the Christian Church the idea of the soul's immortality for long [centuries] took the place of the Scripture doctrine of a future life."²

4. RELEASE OF THE SOUL FROM THE BODY.—Thus the philosophical concept of an "immortal essence" in man was substituted for that of complete redemption for which Holy Writ instructed the believer to wait and to yearn. The Christian hope came gradually to be superseded by "the hope of release

² John Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 233.

from the body at death, instead of the body's redemption and a perfected salvation for the whole nature of the man."³ It was a tangent path that led farther and farther away from the road trodden by the Apostolic Fathers and a smaller group of the Ante-Nicene Fathers as well. It was a distinct departure.

5. IMMORTAL-SOULISM WELL-NIGH EXTINGUISHES BLESSED HOPE.—As a result, an admixture of the two concepts began to appear in a majority of the writings of the Fathers of this period. And contrariwise, the light of the blessed hope dimmed steadily, until it was virtually extinguished in the Dark Ages, when the teaching of Innate Immortality, with its fanciful accessories, came to hold well-nigh complete sway.

Conflicting claims have been put forth concerning the testimony of these ante-Nicene witnesses. To claim that the entire body of Early Church writings constitutes a case for Conditionalism would be to contravene the simple facts of historical record. And similarly, for proponents of Innate Immortality loosely to make similar claims of uniformity for Immortal-Soulism is equally contrary to fact. *Two schools of thought definitely existed side by side.* Testimony for both positions is clearly on record,⁴ for both views were struggling for supremacy—the apostolic view, which insisted on the Second Advent and the resurrection, and the Greek concept, based on the postulate of the soul's inherent immortality. These conflicting positions we must now trace.

6. WRITERS SEGREGATE THEMSELVES INTO THREE-WAY SPLIT.—The ante- and post-Nicene writers thus divide themselves into two opposite schools of thought and teaching. A minority continued to hold to the earlier Conditional-Immortality position, while the majority became committed to the new universal Innate-Immortality concept. But this larger

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Another confusing factor that must be frankly recognized is the changing views of individuals over a period of years. Early concepts were sometimes in conflict with later convictions. There is no way of harmonizing the two except by recognizing the simple fact that they changed their minds—sometimes one way, sometimes the other. Otherwise there is irreconcilable inconsistency, conflict, and nullification of testimony.

group, holding the dogma of inherent and indefeasible immortality for good and evil alike, soon split into two opposing groups:

(1) A majority, who championed the related dogma of the Eternal Torment of the immortal wicked; and (2) those who adopted the postulate of the ultimate universal restoration of all the indefeasibly immortal wicked.

These variant groups, with their conflicting concepts of life and death, are listed for convenient over-all view in chronological and categorical order and grouping in the Tabular Chart on page 758. Personal conclusions may be drawn by the reader. The documented evidence appears throughout these chapters. Summarizing charts appear periodically to aid in obtaining an accurate over-all view.

II. Justin Martyr—Champions and Amplifies Apostolic Conditionalism

Following close upon the last of the Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr introduces a new group of able church leaders and writers, beginning in the middle of the second century. These are the Ante-Nicene Fathers—that is, dated before the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. During this second period, or epoch, despite the penetrations of pagan Platonic philosophy, a notable line of witnesses—Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Polycrates, Irenaeus, Novatian, and Arnobius—continues to hold to the apostolic position on the nature and destiny of man.

First in the series was JUSTIN MARTYR, or Justin the Philosopher (c. A.D. 106-c. 165), foremost apologist of the second century who was finally beheaded for his testimony. He was probably a Roman citizen, although born in Samaria. He received a liberal Hellenic education. Then, traveling extensively, he made the rounds of the leading systems of philosophy—Stoic, Aristotelian (Peripatetic), Pythagorean, and Platonic—ever searching for truth, particularly that he might find

Justin Martyr—Denies Separate Immortality of Soul; Teaches Final Annihilation for Wicked.



the true relation between God and man, and the true nature and destiny of man.

Platonism, with its impressive concepts of truth, beauty, and goodness, fascinated him for a time. But the inescapable truth of the Old Testament—the New was not yet compiled and in general circulation—together with the fearlessness of the Christians in the presence of death, led him to find in Christ what he had failed to find in Plato. Thenceforth, from his conversion (c. A.D. 130), he devoted his life to the defense of Christianity when it was being fiercely assailed. He sealed his testimony with his blood when the public profession of Christianity was a crime, as it was still legally proscribed.⁵

1. DAWN OF A NEW ERA IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY.—Justin's conversion marked the dawn of a distinctly new era in Christian history, as he became the first of the Christian apologists whose

⁵ According to Eusebius, during the reign of Antoninus Pius the philosophers, particularly the Cynics, plotted against Justin's life, and brought about his martyrdom in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the *Chronicon Paschale* giving the date of A.D. 165. (See Eusebius, *Church History*, book 4, chap. 16, note 4, in *NPNF*, 2d series, vol. 1, pp. 193-195.)

works have come down to us, initiating a literature that forced the truths of Christianity upon the attention of a pagan world—despite its hostilities, its blazing fagots, and the casting of Christian believers to the lions. Justin addressed his *First Apology* to Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-161) about 147 or 155, and his *Second Apology* was released upon the accession of Marcus Aurelius, in A.D. 161. It was addressed to the Roman Senate.

In these Justin effectively exposed the foolishness of human wisdom, the weakness of the Socrato-Platonic philosophy, and the impotency of paganism. He discomfited philosophy with its own weapons, exposing the sham and absurdity of its superstitions, while boldly defending his adopted faith. His polemical pen was busy combating Marcion the Gnostic, Trypho the Jew, and others. Regrettably, a number of his writings have been lost.

Leaving Palestine, Justin became an itinerant missionary-evangelist, heralding Christianity as the only way of assured salvation. He then lived for a time in Ephesus, later returning to Rome, where he evidently settled as a Christian teacher. He was not a bishop, but through his writings many were led to embrace Christianity. And as a result many died heroically and sublimely for their Lord and faith.

2. CHAMPIONS THE ONLY TRUE PHILOSOPHY.—Prior to Justin, pagan philosophy had been ascendant. Even the Antonines reigned as philosophers. But now Justin confronts them with a new philosophy—the only philosophy, he claims, that will endure the conflict and test of the ages, the only one destined to live and triumph. Justin loved the language of philosophy but rejected most of its conclusions. In his new role he continued after his conversion to wear his philosopher's pallium, or gown,⁹ as a token that he had found the only true philosophy. He also thought that it would give him more

⁹ Bishop A. Cleveland Coxe, in his "Introductory Note to the First Apology of Justin" (*ANF*, vol. 1, p. 160, note 2), interestingly observes: "It [the gown] survives in the pulpits of Christendom—Greek, Latin, Anglican, Lutheran, etc.—to this day, in slightly different form."

ready access to men of all classes—including the intelligentsia.

He sought conferences with men of education in order to communicate the truth of Christianity. In it all he sought to be true to Christ. He boldly identified himself with the despised Christian sect when imperial disfavor meant death. He not only sought to reconcile faith and reason but was the first to bring classical scholarship and the Platonic philosophy face to face with Christian theology. Nevertheless, he unwittingly did grave injury to the Christian faith by starting into motion certain trends that others carried to their logical and tragic lengths, as will later be seen.

Justin gives us an incomparable insight into the issues of his time. His earlier *Dialogue With Trypho*, most distinguished Jew of the day (probably written about A.D. 148), is the first elaborated exposition of the reasons for regarding Christ as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, and the first systematic attempt to refute the false charges of the Jews in regard to Christianity. Trypho was probably a Pharisee, and therefore a believer in Inherent Immortality. Hence, emphasis on the immortality aspect of Justin's discussion. (For Justin's chronological and categorical placement, see Tabular Chart F, page 758.)

3. PROPHETIC OUTLINE, SECOND ADVENT, AND RESURRECTION.—Justin was a stalwart believer in the Old Testament prophecies as the inspired outline of things to come, his writings constituting a reflection of the prophetic interpretation of his time. Justin held that God alone can reveal the future, citing as proof particulars in the life of the Messiah—such as His being born of a virgin in Bethlehem, His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, et cetera, as well as the predicted destruction of Jerusalem.

To Justin the Second, or premillennial, Advent is the grand climax of all prophecy, with its attendant literal resurrection of the righteous dead and its introduction of the millennium. These were all tied in with the close of the outline

prophecies, as in Daniel 7.⁷ The Advent, Justin held, will take place after the appearance of Antichrist. To him two literal resurrections bound the millennium—that of the righteous dead at its beginning and the “general” resurrection at its close. Such was his eschatological outline, involving the disposition and destiny of man.

III. Justin's Primary Definitions and Usage of Basic Terms

In order to grasp Justin's views on the nature and destiny of man, and his position on the nature and duration of the future punishment of the wicked, certain basic definitions of terms as used by him must be noted. These will help to clarify common misconceptions as to his teaching. This is essential, for Justin has been claimed and quoted on both sides of the immortality issue. He has, by many, been considered as inconsistent and contradictory. However, it might be remarked here that it is not uncommon for men to change their views in the course of time when they find that what they once wrote contravenes their later convictions. This doubtless has a bearing in the case of Justin. And because of his importance and timing, his position will be set forth rather fully.

1. “IMMORTAL EXISTENCE” AND “CEASING TO EXIST.”—Take the term *existence*, or *to exist* (*eimi*). When it is applied to living creatures it means only that they have life or animation. In several places Justin states his belief that no wicked person will continue to have an eternal existence. In one preserved *Fragment* from his lost writings, Justin refers to the original transgression of Adam as having exposed him to that very peril.

“When God formed man at the beginning, He suspended the things of nature on his will, and made an experiment by means of one commandment. For He ordained that, *if* he [man] kept this, he should *partake of immortal existence*; but if he transgressed it, *the contrary* [to “immortal existence”] should be his lot. Man having thus been made,

⁷ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chaps. 31, 47, 49, 33-35, 51-53; Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chaps. 31, 52, 110; Justin, *Fragments of Lost Work of Justin on the Resurrection*, chaps. 2, 4, 9, 10, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 159-270; 294-299. For Justin's interpretation of prophecy see L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 1, pp. 231-234.

and immediately looking towards transgression, naturally became subject to *corruption*.”⁸

“Immortal existence” was thus contingent on obedience; and contrariwise, disobedience would and did forfeit eternal existence. The conditional “if’s” in this excerpt determine the individual outcome. In several places Justin speaks of the ultimate *nonexistence* of the souls of the wicked. Thus wicked men along with fallen angels are doomed to final destruction. For example: “God delays causing the confusion and destruction of the whole world, by which the wicked angels and demons *and men* shall cease to exist [*mēketi ōsi*].”⁹

The time will come, then, though delayed, when the wicked will no longer exist.

2. “DESTRUCTION” IS CESSATION OF EXISTENCE.—As to Justin’s use of “destroy” (*apollumi*), there can be no doubt that by this term he meant to bring to an end, to cause to cease to exist, because not eternal. The idea of Endless Torment did not enter the picture, nor eternal suffering of pain. That was a later concept. And Justin expressly distinguishes “torment” from “destruction.” Thus in his *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*—possibly by Justin—in speaking of Plato’s opinion of the gods of the heathen—in which Plato held that they are not truly eternal, but at some time came into existence and at another time would cease to exist—Justin then observes: “These expressions declare to those who can rightly understand them the *death and destruction of the gods that have been brought into being*.”¹⁰

There can be no doubt as to Justin’s meaning of “destruction.” The concept of endless misery is not involved in it, but instead a cessation of existence, or termination of being. Advocates of the Eternal Torment school of thought hold that “destruction” means to be endlessly “tormented in pain.” But

⁸ Justin, *Other Fragments From Lost Writings of Justin*, No. 11, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 301. (Italics supplied.)

⁹ Justin, *Second Apology*, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 190. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁰ Justin Martyr, *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, chap. 22, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 282. (Italics supplied.)

Justin expressly distinguishes between "torment" and "destruction," as illustrated in Christ's punishment of the devils. Thus Justin says: "This is, was, and shall be the strength of Him alone, whose name every [evil] power dreads, *being* very much *tormented* because they *shall be destroyed* by Him."¹¹

The "torment" was a present actuality, then being experienced; whereas the "*destruction*" was yet future, in dread prospect. Justin's meaning is consequently the usual intent of Greek writers generally, employing the natural sense. Here is one of many similar passages in Justin's various writings:

"By whom [through Christ] God *destroys* both the serpent and those angels and *men* who are like him; but works deliverance from death to those who repent of their wickedness and believe upon Him."¹²

"Destruction" and "death" are thus equated as identical.

3. "IMMORTALITY" MEANS "NOT SUBJECT TO DEATH."—Justin's use of the words "immortal" and "immortality" (*athanasia*), indicates deathlessness, that is, *not subject to death or loss of existence*. Justin frequently asserts that Immortality will be the peculiar, exclusive possession of the redeemed, and that the wicked will not obtain it. He likewise repeatedly lays down the principle that Immortality is a *gift of God*, not bestowed on any as yet, but to be received at the resurrection. Thus: "*He shall raise all men from the dead, and appoint some to be incorruptible, immortal, and free from sorrow in the everlasting and imperishable kingdom.*"¹³

So much for definitions. Now to *usages*.

IV. Justin's Definitive Positions on Nature and Destiny of Man

1. CONTENTED FOR LITERAL RESURRECTION OF DEAD.—Justin took an unyielding position on the *literal* resurrection of the dead, already under attack, holding that those who deny

¹¹ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 111, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 254. (Italics supplied.)

¹² *Ibid.*, chap. 100, p. 249. (Italics supplied.) See also chap. 39, p. 214; Justin, *Second Apology*, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 190.

¹³ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 117, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 257. (Italics supplied.) See also chaps. 5, p. 197; 46, p. 218; 69, p. 233; *First Apology*, chap. 43, p. 177.

it are "wrong." Thus, "They who maintain the wrong opinion say that there is no resurrection of the flesh."¹⁴

2. SOULS NOT TAKEN TO HEAVEN AT DEATH.—Justin felt strongly about the resurrection, and denied the actual Christianity of those who taught that the soul goes to Heaven at death:

"If you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth], [note 4: i.e., "resurrection"], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians."¹⁵

3. "MAN" COMPOSED OF BOTH "BODY AND SOUL."—Justin also refutes as heresy the theory just then being introduced, that the soul alone is the real man, and can act without the body:

"What is man but the reasonable animal composed of body and soul? Is the soul by itself man? No; but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? No, but it is called the body of man. If, then, neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called *man* to life and resurrection, He has called not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and the body."¹⁶

Because of the vital character of the issue he presses the point, adding, "How then did he raise the dead? Their souls or their bodies? Manifestly both."¹⁷ And he illustrates it in this way:

"For as in the case of a yoke of oxen, if one or other is loosed from the yoke, neither of them can plough alone; so neither can soul or body alone effect anything, if they be unyoked from their communion."¹⁸

4. DENIES SEPARATE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.—Justin denied that the soul can live on independent of, or separate from, the body. And it ceases to live when God so wills:

"Now the soul partakes of life, since God wills it to live. Thus, then, it will not even partake [of life] when God does not will it to live. For to live is not its attribute, as it is God's; but as a man does not live

¹⁴ Justin, *On the Resurrection*, chap. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 294.

¹⁵ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 80, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 239. (Brackets in original.)

¹⁶ Justin, *On the Resurrection*, chap. 8, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 297, 298.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 298.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 297.

always, and the soul is not for ever conjoined with the body, since, whenever this harmony must be broken up, the soul leaves the body, and the man exists no longer; even so, whenever the soul must cease to exist, the spirit of life is removed from it, and there is no more soul, but it goes back to the place from whence it is taken."¹⁹

5. TEACHES UTTER EXTINCTION OF THE WICKED.—Justin repeatedly taught the utter extinction of the wicked. As already noted, he did not believe in the eternal misery of the lost:

"God delays causing the confusion and destruction of the whole world, by which the wicked angels and demons and men shall *cease to exist*."²⁰

"Thus some which have appeared worthy of God never die; but others are punished *so long as God wills them to exist and to be punished*."²¹

Justin frequently uses the Biblical terms "everlasting punishment" and "eternal fire," as will be noted. Yet he positively declares that the sinner will ultimately cease to exist. Therefore the term cannot, to him, mean "everlasting punishing."

¹⁹ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 6, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 198. (Brackets in original.)

²⁰ Justin, *Second Apology*, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 190. (Italics supplied.)

²¹ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 5, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 197. (Italics supplied.)

Justin on Final Annihilation of the Wicked

I. Apologies Amplify Intent of Everlasting Punishment

It is well to state at this point that since the ground covered by these key Ante-Nicene Fathers has been subject to many claims and counterclaims and much dispute, a rather full survey of such a pivotal writer as Justin is required. Parts of the portrayal are therefore more for reference and record than for cursory reading. The investigator needs the full coverage for examination—hence treatment in some depth.

Justin's two Apologies are of unusual import because of the distinguished character of their recipients and their appeal to the Roman public. As noted, the *First Apology* had as its intended reader the Roman emperor. The *Second Apology* was sent to the Roman Senate. These Apologies are of special concern in our quest because of their sustained emphasis on the nature and destiny of the soul and the fate of the wicked. Justin is here striking not only against the positions of Platonism but against the errors and absurdities of Gnosticism, then coming to prominence, with its degradation of Christ and its immortality of the soul. This emphasis continues as a persisting theme, like the proverbial scarlet thread that runs throughout the cordage of the British Navy. The agitation of the time, both from within and from without, now forced the issues upon the church.

Although a few seeming contradictions appear, in which Justin is apparently in conflict with himself, nevertheless the

same principles of Conditionalism that permeated his previous *Dialogue With Trypho* are iterated and reiterated, and clearly constitute his preponderant position. It is, moreover, particularly significant that Justin's repeated declarations on the Conditionalist nature of the soul were neither opposed, reproved, nor repudiated by his contemporaries. He was living and writing in the formative period of the church, when its views had not yet become crystallized into creedal form. His were, in fact, but a continuation of the earlier views. And he was the leading Christian spokesman of his day.

The acceptance of Christianity had changed Justin's view on the last things. Instead of considering death the beckoning gateway of the future life, as he had believed when a pagan, he now championed the truth of the resurrection, and thus denied the Platonic thesis of the inherent immortality of the soul that was now seeking a place in the church. The immortality of the *righteous alone* had become Justin's settled faith. In numerous passages he asserts that immortality is the peculiar and exclusive possession of the redeemed—the gift of God, not bestowed as yet, but to be received at the resurrection. And he likewise stressed the Christian doctrine of coming retribution at the hand of a just and righteous God.

However, by natural bent of mind and by training Justin was a philosopher. He was steeped in its phrasings, and familiar with the Platonic postulate of the natural and inalienable immortality of the soul. At times he employed some of the thought patterns familiar to his distinguished readers, in an attempt to attract attention to the Christian faith and to win friends and adherents thereto. He assured his royal reader that the empire had nothing to fear from the Christians, as Christ's kingdom is not of this world. In fact, he said, the Christians were his best subjects.

At times Justin drafted upon the language of the schools, which would be readily understood, as he sought to cushion unwarranted antagonisms between gospel truth and Greek philosophy. Some feel that he was not always uniformly con-

sistent or wise. Few men are. But when he discarded philosophical mysticism Justin thought that at the same time he had rejected its errors. He assuredly championed the cause of Christianity and made a masterful pioneer defense of its doctrines. But already the rising cloud of departure was beginning to darken the Christian sky, though as yet but small and ill-defined.

I. CHRIST'S JUDGMENT PRECEDES PUNISHMENT OF WICKED.—After various preliminaries, and declaring that Christians, though threatened with death, would scorn "to live by telling a lie," Justin comes to the crucial question of the fate of the wicked. Seeing a common starting point, he calls attention to the fact that Platonism also looks for a judgment, with punishment for the wicked. Christians, he says, do the same, but with this distinctive difference—it is at the "hand of Christ." Note it:

"And Plato, in like manner, used to say that Rhadamanthus and Minos would punish the wicked who came before them; and we say that the same thing will be done, *but at the hand of Christ*, and upon the wicked in the same bodies united again to their spirits which are now to undergo everlasting [*aiōnios*] punishment."¹

Justin here speaks of "everlasting punishment," but not of unending conscious suffering, or punishing. It is only by assuming that *aiōnios* means endless, instead of "for the age," that the thought of eternal punishing can find sustaining support. And inasmuch as this point appears at the very opening of his *Apology*, it will be wise to compass this aspect of Justin's position at the very outset. We therefore digress long enough to trace this emphasis on the punishment of the wicked continuing on throughout the two *Apologies*.

2. "ETERNAL PUNISHMENT" NOT ETERNAL CONSCIOUS SUFFERING.—Justin's key references to the destiny of the ungodly are these:

¹ Justin, *First Apology*, chap. 8, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 165. (Italics supplied.)

- "To undergo everlasting punishment" (*First Apology*, chap. 8, p. 165).
 "To the everlasting punishment of fire" (*ibid.*, chap. 12, p. 166).
 "Suffer punishment in eternal fire" (*ibid.*, chap. 17, p. 168).
 "Eternal punishment is laid up" (*ibid.*, chap. 18, p. 169).
 "There will be burning up of all" (*ibid.*, chap. 20, p. 170).
 "Are punished in everlasting fire" (*ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 170).
 "Brings eternal punishment by fire" (*ibid.*, chap. 45, p. 178).
 "Punished in eternal fire" (*Second Apology*, chap. 1, p. 188).
 "In eternal fire, shall suffer their just punishment and penalty" (*ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 191).
 "The wicked are punished in eternal fire" (*ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 191).

These ten citations are impressive. But it is in this immediate connection that Justin explicitly declares that, when the fires have done their work, the wicked then "*shall cease to exist.*"² That is too explicit for misunderstanding. And in equally strong and definite language Justin stresses the inseparable fact that they will be punished only "so long as God wills them to exist and to be punished."³ The inescapable conclusion is that it then ceases. Theirs is therefore a *terminable* existence. At the end of the period determined by the will and justice of God, the punishment of wicked souls will cease by the very cessation of their existence.

Such is the obvious meaning, for Justin repeatedly denies the inherent, independent, and indefeasible immortality of the soul. God only, he maintains, has absolute, independent, original, and underived immortality. Justin obviously did not intend to teach an unending eternity of conscious misery in torment. Scholarly Dean F. W. Farrar, of Westminster, similarly observed that Justin's words—

"imply an opinion on the part of St. Justin that at the end of a certain time, defined by the will of God, the punishment of souls shall cease either by the cessation of their existence or the removal of their punishment."⁴

3. RIGHTEOUS DEEMED WORTHY OF INCORRUPTION.—In chapter ten of Justin's *First Apology* the question of "incor-

² Justin, *Second Apology*, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 190. (Italics supplied.)

³ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 5, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 197.

⁴ F. W. Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 236.

ruption," or "incorruptibility," is brought out, and God's purpose in the creation of man and "all things":

"He [God] in the beginning did of His goodness, for man's sake, create all things out of unformed matter; and if men by their works show themselves worthy of this His design, they are deemed worthy, and so we have received—of reigning in company with Him, being *delivered from corruption and suffering*. For as in the beginning He created us when we were not, so do we consider that, in like manner, those who choose what is pleasing to Him are, on account of their choice, *deemed worthy of incorruption* and of fellowship with Him."⁵

And as Denniston comments, "It is not possible to doubt that he [Justin] uses the word 'corruptible' throughout as equivalent to 'perishable,' or 'liable to come to an end.'"⁶ And the reverse would be true.

4. EACH GOES TO "PUNISHMENT OR SALVATION."—Chapter twelve deals with the impossibility of the wicked escaping the "notice of God," and the rewards or punishments that are to follow. Then he declares:

"Each man goes to everlasting punishment or salvation according to the value of his actions.⁷ For if all men knew this, no one would choose wickedness even for a little, knowing that he goes to the everlasting punishment⁸ of fire; but would by all means restrain himself, and adorn himself with virtue, that he might obtain the good gifts of God, and escape the punishments."⁹

5. PRAYS FOR "EXISTING AGAIN IN INCORRUPTION."—Chapter thirteen touches on the Christian's worship of the "Maker of this universe," the "unchangeable and eternal God, the Creator of all." Thanking God through prayer and praise for our existence and blessings, we "present before Him petitions for our *existing again in incorruption* through faith in Him." That is significant. And he adds, "Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose."¹⁰ Always he is countering the errors of Gnosticism and of Platonism.

⁵ Justin, *First Apology*, chap. 10, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 165. (Italics supplied.)

⁶ Denniston, *The Perishing Soul*, p. 311, note 7.

⁷ Hudson says, "merit of his deeds" (*Debt and Grace*, p. 313).

⁸ Pusey translates it, "eternal condemnation" (*What Is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment?* p. 179).

⁹ Justin, *First Apology*, chap. 12, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 166.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 166. (Italics supplied.)

6. PUNISHMENT IS PROPORTIONATE TO SIN.—In chapter seventeen, on the Christian's relation to civil obedience, including "taxes," Justin declares:

"We believe (or rather, indeed, are persuaded) that every man will suffer punishment in eternal fire according to the merit of his deed, and will render account according to the power he has received from God, as Christ intimated when He said, 'To whom God has given more, of him shall more be required.'" ¹¹

Then, continuing his theme in chapter eighteen, Justin remarks on how all men die "the death common to all" (the first death), which—

"if it issued in insensibility, would be a godsend (note 1, p. 169: "a piece of unlooked-for-luck") to all the wicked. But since sensation remains to all who have ever lived, and eternal punishment is laid up (i.e., for the wicked), see that ye neglect not to be convinced, and to hold as your belief, that these things are true." ¹²

The wicked will live again after the resurrection and be duly punished by God. But to hold that the wicked are automatically annihilated at death would be to remove the deterrent of all future punishment. Justin then refers to the pagan practices of necromancy—divination, familiars, or familiar spirits—and touches on the opinions of Empedocles, Pythagoras, Plato, and Socrates, and the consideration given to such by the emperor. Justin then says that, as for Christians who believe in God, "we expect to receive again our own bodies, though they be dead and cast into the earth, for we maintain that with God nothing is impossible." ¹³

Justin stresses the resurrection in chapter nineteen ("The Resurrection Possible"), declaring that the righteous shall "in God's appointed time rise again and put on incorruption." And he adds that "hell is a place where those are to be punished who have lived wickedly." ¹⁴

7. QUESTION OF "SENSATION AFTER DEATH."—Justin is careful to differentiate between the teachings of the pagan

¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 17, p. 168.

¹² *Ibid.*, chap. 18, pp. 168, 169.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 169.

writers on the coming conflagration of all things. The Stoics even teach that God Himself will be "resolved into fire," and the world "formed anew by this revolution." The Christians, on the contrary, "understand that God, the Creator of all things, is superior to the things that are to be changed."¹⁵ Christian teachings are "fuller and more divine," offering proof for what they affirm. Then follows one of Justin's difficult statements:

"While we say that there will be a burning up of all, we shall seem to utter the doctrine of the Stoics: and while we affirm that the souls of the wicked, *being endowed with sensation even after death*, are punished, and that those of the good being delivered from punishment spend a blessed existence, we shall seem to say the same things as the poets and philosophers."¹⁶

But from other passages it is obvious that the "sensation" after the "first" or common-to-all death comes at the resurrection of the wicked at the close of the thousand years. And the pain of punishment will continue only as long as God deems just, the wicked then passing into nonexistence.

The learned Prebendary Constable has an intriguing comment on this expression. First he asks, "Does Justin contradict himself? Some say he does." Or was he ambiguous? But Constable follows these with another pertinent question: "Or, has Justin some philosophical theory which may appear to us, and really be, a very absurd one, but which relieves him of the charge of ambiguity and contradiction?" Constable immediately states, "The latter is our belief."¹⁷ This scholarly writer then recounts the strange philosophical theory current in Platonism, namely, of a secret, or divine, fire, in contrast with common fire. The former is used in "Divine judgments"—a fire that "*does not consume what it scorches, but while it burns it repairs.*" And he adds that this concept Justin "probably borrowed from Plato."¹⁸

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 20, p. 169.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁷ Constable, *Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, p. 174.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 176. Constable cites Plato, *Phaedo*, 79, 80. This is discussed further under Tertullian, which see.

Constable adds that Justin evidently "supposes the fire of hell to burn on through eternity, and to be ever consuming and reproducing these 'immortal members.'" And, according to the theory, "they must possess that sensitiveness to the action of fire which all consumable matter though devoid of animal life is possessed of, and without which it could not be consumed at all." And he notes that the word "*aisthesis*, which he puts for the sensation of the members, is the very word" used by Plato in this way. Constable explains that this "'*kind of sensation*'" is "not the sensitiveness of pain which the living animal feels when exposed to the heat of fire." He presses this point that it is "unaccompanied with pain. Pain departed when the soul ceased to exist in hell."¹⁹ At the risk of redundancy, Constable summarizes the strange philosophical opinion of the time in these words:

"The members [limbs] of the damned, devoid of animal life and therefore incapable of pain, would for ever continue to grow and renew themselves. This he [Justin] thought, and truly, a kind of life, such as vegetables have, and so he calls them immortal. And thus we have Justin consistent with himself. Thus we are free to give their natural force to his descriptions of the utter destruction of existence in hell, *i.e.* of the existence of animal life."²⁰

Constable is probably right in his evaluation.

II. Intent of *Aiōnion* Fire for Sinners

1. GODLY IMMORTALIZED; SINNERS PUNISHED IN "AIŌNION" FIRE.—In chapter twenty-one appears another passage sometimes misunderstood:

"And we have learned ["been taught"] that those only are deified [*apathanatizesthai*—"made immortal"], who have lived near to God in holiness and virtue; and we believe that those who live wickedly and do not repent are punished in everlasting [*aiōnion*] fire."²¹

The *aiōnion* fire is the fire of the "world to come," as long as God determines it to continue. Justin here states that those

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 178.

²¹ Justin, *First Apology*, chap. 21, p. 170.

only who live near to God are "*made immortal*," not that the holy are deified. No trace of such a doctrine is found among the early Christians.²² And the "punished in everlasting fire" statement involves ultimate and entire cessation of being. As we have seen, Justin did not believe that everlasting fire involved endless suffering. Holders of the Endless-Torment thesis have no right to put a construction upon Justin's statements that involves him in direct contradiction, when his statements can be made to agree.

2. EXTENT NOT KNOWN TO MAN; DETERMINED BY GOD.—

Still another perplexing statement is in chapter twenty-eight, where Justin states:

"For among us the prince of the wicked spirits is called the serpent, and Satan, and the devil, as you can learn by looking into our [Christian] writings. And that he [the devil] would be sent into the fire with his host, and the men who follow him, and would be punished for an endless [*aperanton*, "unbounded age"] duration,²³ Christ foretold. For the reason why God has delayed to do this, is His regard for the human race."²⁴

This punishment is beyond any boundary that can be set by man. It is for an indefinite period so far as man is concerned, and determined by God alone. Denniston translates it "punished for the unlimited age" (*ton aperanton aiōna*), and comments:

"This last expression is far from denoting a real infinity or eternity; being regularly applied to objects of which the limits are simply *not apparent*—as 'the boundless ocean, plain,' etc. It thus defines the 'age' of punishment as one to which we cannot set the term. But as the ocean and plain, however boundless, have their limit, so may the 'boundless age' be assumed as having its end also."²⁵

In chapter thirty-nine Justin says, If Roman soldiers prefer

²² Dr. Petavel's comment (*op. cit.*, p. 236, note 1) is pertinent: "*Apathanatizesthai*. According to its etymology, the primary meaning of this word is to *immortalize*. Its use in the sense of apotheosis shows that among the Greeks deification and immortalization were synonymous terms, immortality being the prerogative of the gods. The evident inference is that man, not being a god, without this process has not immortality." See also Beecher, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

²³ Beecher (*op. cit.*, p. 214) calls attention to the fact that Justin here uses the same word (*aperanton*) that Pindar does when he says (N. viii. 64), "Some men seek gold, and others (*pedion aperanton*) a vast or unbounded extent of land"; and (in P. ix. 61) where he speaks of "unbounded or immeasurable strength (*alkas apeirantou*)."

²⁴ Justin, *First Apology*, chap. 28, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 172.

²⁵ Denniston, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

allegiance to country, kindred, and to their own corruptible lives, even though they can be offered "nothing incorruptible," should not Christians, who "earnestly long for *incorruption* [*aphtharsias erōntas*]," "endure all things, in order to obtain what we desire from Him who is able to grant it?"²⁶

3. IMMORTALITY IS PROMISED; NOT YET POSSESSED.—And in chapter forty-two, after stating that Christ came according to inspired prediction and was crucified, died, arose, ascended, and now reigns, Justin adds, "There is joy afforded to those who *expect the immortality promised by Him.*"²⁷

4. "AIŌNION" PUNISHMENT IS BY FIRE.—In chapter forty-five Justin comments on how pagan persecution, even to death, "indeed does no harm to us, but to you and all who unjustly hate us, and do not repent, brings eternal [*aiōnion*] punishment by [or "in"] fire."²⁸

If by *aiōnion* Justin meant absolutely eternal, then he was not in accord with the general contemporary usage of the term, and would be in direct conflict with his own repeated assertions as to the ultimate blotting out of the wicked. Such a demand is inconsistent and unnecessary.

5. FINAL DISPOSITION AT SECOND ADVENT.—Finally, in chapter fifty-two, in dealing with the certainty of prophecy, Justin refers to the "two advents" of Christ, one past and the other yet to come, when—

"He shall come from heaven with glory, accompanied by His angelic host, when also He shall raise the bodies of all men who have lived, and shall clothe ["invest"] those of the worthy with *immortality*, and shall send those of the wicked, endued with eternal sensibility,²⁹ into everlasting fire with the wicked devils."³⁰

Actually, it is "the fire of ages."

"And in what kind of sensation and punishment the wicked are to be, hear from what was said in like manner with reference to this; it is as

²⁶ Justin, *First Apology*, chap. 39, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 176. (Italics supplied.)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 42, p. 177. (Italics supplied.)

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 45, p. 178. (Italics supplied.)

²⁹ "Eternal sensibility" has already been noted in sec. 7, on pp. 821, 822.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 52, p. 180. (Italics supplied.)

follows: 'Their worm shall not rest, and their fire shall not be quenched.'"³¹

As already noted, it is only by assuming, without justification, that in this passage *aiōnios* means endlessly "eternal" instead of "for ages" that the concept of eternal punishing can be maintained. The holy alone are immortalized, Justin constantly affirmed. That was Justin's position.

III. Scholars Recognize Justin's Position on Destruction of Wicked

That we neither misstate nor misunderstand Justin's position on the final total destruction of the wicked is sustained by the observation of many scholars of various faiths, as is apparent from a few of their terse statements:

KITTO: Justin "held that punishments, at least *sensible* ones, would sometime cease."³²

ROTHE: "Justin Martyr . . . thought that God would annihilate the lost."³³

HAGENBACH: Justin affirmed the soul to be mortal, perishing with the body, with immortality as a reward to be acquired.³⁴

BALLOU: Justin represented that "the wicked will be, eventually, annihilated."³⁵

BEECHER: Justin held and taught "the final annihilation of the wicked," as "most eminent scholars concede."³⁶

GIESELER: Justin held that the souls of the ungodly "will be at some time wholly annihilated."³⁷

ALGER: Justin "did not believe in endless torment, but in the final annihilation of the wicked."³⁸

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Kitto, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, art., "Soul."

³³ Richard Rothe, *Dogmatik*, vol. 3, p. 158.

³⁴ K. R. Hagenbach, *Compendium of the History of Doctrines*, vol. 1, pp. 162-164, art. "Immortality."

³⁵ Hosea Ballou, 2d, *Ancient History of Universalism*, p. 58.

³⁶ Beecher, *op. cit.*, pp. 211, 212. C. F. Hudson (*Debt and Grace*, p. 315) lists Grotius, Huet, Rössler, Du Pin, Doederlein, Münscher, Munter, Daniel, Hase, Starck, Kern, Otto, Ritter, J. Pye Smith, Bloomfield, and Gieseler as confirming the same.

³⁷ John C. L. Gieseler, *A Textbook of Church History*, sec. 45.

³⁸ Alger, *The Destiny of the Soul*, p. 195.

CONSTABLE: Justin held to the "utter destruction of existence in hell."³⁹

IV. *Dialogue*—Righteous to Be Immortalized; Wicked Destroyed

Because of the key position occupied by Justin as first of the ante-Nicene witnesses, his entire testimony needs to be surveyed that comprehensive deductions of his positions may be made. First in point of production comes his *Dialogue With Trypho*. This grew out of a challenge by this noted Pharisee while Justin was in Ephesus at the Xystus, or place of disputations.⁴⁰ Their discussion is cast in the form of a Socratic dialogue, and is a quasi-biographical sketch of Justin himself, presented through the lips of the aged Christian of venerable manners,⁴¹ whose views were actually Justin's own.

Here Justin repeatedly denies the inherent immortality of the soul, contending that the "worthy" will be given eternal life, whereas the "wicked" will be punished as long as God determines is just, then will pass into nonexistence. To prepare the way for the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, Justin first refuted the Platonic postulate of perpetual self-existence and the natural and indefeasible immortality, or endless permanence, of the soul. His arguments are the more remarkable because he had once been an ardent Platonist.

1. CATEGORICALLY DENIES INNATE IMMORTALITY AND TRANSMIGRATION.—Answering (in chapter four) the question "Is the soul also divine and immortal?" and a part of Deity? Justin categorically denies that it is a part of Deity. And he absolutely rejects the Platonic concept of the "pre-existence and eternity" of souls, and its contention that they "transmigrate into other bodies," and are "imprisoned in the bodies

³⁹ Constable, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

⁴⁰ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 194, note 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 195.

of certain wild animals" as a form of punishment.⁴² Then comes Justin's declaration, "Nor ought it [the soul] to be called immortal; for if it is immortal, it is plainly unbegotten" (uncreated), in contrast with the Platonic contention that "it [the soul] is both unbegotten and immortal."⁴³ And this is buttressed by the declaration "If the world is begotten ['created'], souls are necessarily begotten, and perhaps at one time they were not in existence."⁴⁴ That was his approach.

2. SOME "NEVER DIE"; OTHERS SUFFER DETERMINATE PUNISHMENT.—To the direct question "They are not, then, immortal?" comes Justin's emphatic "No."⁴⁵ Then he adds, "But I do not say, indeed, that *all souls* die; for that were truly a piece of good fortune to the evil." The disposition of all souls awaits the "time of judgment." Then follows the declaration of the future: "Thus some which have appeared worthy of God never die; but others are punished *so long as God wills them to exist and to be punished.*"⁴⁶

Thus Justin asserts, by antithesis, that the wicked *finally cease to exist*, after punishment as long as God shall determine. While the Greek expression for "all souls" may be ambiguous, strong bias has been revealed by some translators by substituting "*any* souls," or even "*no* souls,"⁴⁷ and by unjustifiably injecting the thought of "a place of misery and torment" during the interim.

3. CREATED BEINGS MAY BE "BLOTTED OUT AND CEASE TO EXIST."—Contending that created beings may be "blotted out and cease to exist," Justin maintains that "God alone is

⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. 4, pp. 196, 197.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 197.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Dr. E. B. Pusey (*op. cit.*, p. 182) frankly admits that "the aged man, to whom S. Justin owed the beginning of his conversion, arguing against Platonism, denied the immortality of the soul independent of its Author."

⁴⁶ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 5, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 197. (Italics supplied.)

⁴⁷ Congregationalist Edward Beecher (*op. cit.*, p. 332) asserts that "violent and unprincipled interpretation" has been "resorted to" in order to deny Justin's position on annihilation. Beecher cites Maranus as trying "to get a denial of annihilation" out of the sentence reading, "I do not say that *all souls* die." But Beecher charges that "he by a wrong position of the negative, and a wrong translation of it, brings out the assertion, 'I say that *no souls* die.' Otto well says that such a position of the negative cannot be defended, and that Maranus must have known it. Besides, it produces an immediate contradiction; for Justin soon goes on to say that some minds are punished and die."

unbegotten and incorruptible." Therefore created souls "both die and are punished."

" "For those things which exist after (note 1: "beside") God, or shall at any time exist, these have the nature of decay, and are such as may be blotted out and cease to exist; for God alone is unbegotten and incorruptible, and therefore He is God, but all other things after Him are created and corruptible. For this reason souls both die and are punished." ' ' " 48

4. SEPARATED FROM BODY, SOUL CEASES TO EXIST.—That the soul "is or has life" is incontestable, but, Is that life inherent, or is it received as a "partaker"? This is the question asked in chapter six. Justin's answer is unequivocal, and cannot be misunderstood. He denies that the soul could live separated, or apart, from the body. Life comes by the will and provision of God; otherwise the soul "must cease to exist."

" "Now the soul partakes of life, since God wills it to live. Thus, then, it will not even partake [of life] when God does not will it to live. For to live is not its attribute, as it is God's; but as a man does not live always, and the soul is not for ever conjoined with the body, since, whenever this harmony must be broken up, the soul leaves the body, and the man exists no longer; even so, whenever the soul must cease to exist, the spirit of life is removed from it, and there is no more soul, but it goes back to the place from whence it was taken." ' ' " 49

There is a vast difference between the two ideas of "would not live *if* God did not choose," and "will not live *when* God does not choose."

5. CHRIST COMING AGAIN TO DESTROY THE WICKED.—Justin reminds Trypho, in the intervening chapters, that righteousness comes not by the law, nor by Jewish rites (chapters twelve to fourteen); that there is no salvation "except through Christ" (chapter twenty-six); and that "true righteousness" is obtained only in Christ (chapter thirty)—whose power is now great, but will be much greater at the Second Advent (chapter thirty-one). He then "distinguishes" between "the two advents"—the first in humility for salvation, and the second in glory for

⁴⁸ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 5, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 197.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 198. (Brackets in original.) Olshausen (*Opuscula*, p. 180) says that such is "equivalent to non-existence." And Moehler (*Patrologia*, p. 242) comments, "sink again into its own nothing."

judgment and rewards (chapters thirty-two, thirty-three). Justin then warns about false Christians who abandon the "pure doctrine of Jesus Christ," in contrast with those who are "faithful and steadfast in the hope announced by Him" (chapter thirty-five). But the Lord, who was crucified, arose, and ascended to Heaven, marks those who persecute the saints, "until He come again, and destroy them all, and render to each his deserts" (chapter thirty-nine).

V. Disposition of Righteous and Wicked

1. "SOME" PUNISHED WITH FIRE; "OTHERS" RECEIVE IMMORTALITY.—In chapter thirty-nine Justin synchronizes the time of the destruction of the demons and wicked men with the second advent of Christ—when He will "come again, and destroy them all."⁵⁰ That leads him back, in chapter forty-five, to the incarnation of Christ, in order to compass the destruction of Satan and his angels and to destroy death through the Second Advent, when some shall be immortalized and some punished in the "condemnation of fire," and "be no more." Thus:

"In order that, by this dispensation, the serpent that sinned from the beginning, and the angels like him, may be destroyed [*kataluthōsi*], and that death may be contemned,⁵¹ and for ever quit, at the second coming of the Christ Himself, those who believe in Him and live acceptably,—and *be no more*: when some are sent to be punished unceasingly into judgment and condemnation of fire; but others shall exist in freedom from suffering, from corruption, and from grief, and in immortality."⁵²

2. SAINTS RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE AND IMMORTAL.—Immortality is set forth as reserved for the resurrected righteous. And Justin stresses his belief that true Christians, then undergoing persecution even unto death, will be immortalized *at the first resurrection*. He declares: "God will raise up by His Christ,

⁵⁰ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 39, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 214.

⁵¹ Pusey says, "set at nought" (*op. cit.*, p. 181).

⁵² *Ibid.*, chap. 45, p. 217. Beecher (*op. cit.*, p. 214) states that when "Justin says that the wicked are punished (*apoustos*) incessantly or without cessation, he means that this is true during the time of their punishment, *however long it may be.*"

and will make us *incorruptible*, and undisturbed, and immortal [*aphthartous kai apatheis kai athanatous*]." ⁵³

The same thought is continued in chapter sixty-nine, where Christ, who even raised the dead at His first advent, will come for His own at His second advent, and "He shall raise him [the maimed] up at His second advent perfectly sound, *after* He has made him *immortal, and incorruptible*, and free from grief." ⁵⁴

3. SOUL NOT "TAKEN TO HEAVEN" AT DEATH.—In chapter eighty, Justin discusses faithfulness in following the Scriptures. He assures Trypho that he will not "say one thing and think another." Then referring to differences of view among professed Christians, Justin states candidly that "some who are called Christians" are "godless, impious heretics," and "teach doctrines that are in every way blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish." Declaring that he himself chooses to "follow not men or men's doctrines, but God and the doctrines [delivered] by Him," he states:

"If you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians." ⁵⁵

And near the close of the same chapter he says that he and others who share his views are "right-minded Christians on all points," and "are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead" and a coming millennium.

4. WICKED PUNISHED AS GOD DEEMS PROPER.—In chapter eighty-eight, after speaking of "the human race, which from Adam had fallen under the power of death and the guile of the serpent, and each one of which had committed personal transgression," Justin touches on the result of man's free will in relation to the question of life and death:

⁵³ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 46, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 218. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 69, p. 233. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 80, p. 239. (Brackets in original.)

"For God, wishing both angels and men, who were endowed with free-will, and at their own disposal, to do whatever He had strengthened each to do, made them so, that if they chose the things acceptable to Himself, He would keep them free from death and from punishment; but that if they did evil, He would punish each as He sees fit."⁶⁶

5. "DESTRUCTION" IS EQUATED WITH "DEATH." In chapter one hundred, in speaking of Christ as both the Son of God and Son of man, through assuming flesh and being born of Mary, Justin harks back to Eve, who, "having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death." And now the virgin Mary brought forth the Son of God—

"by whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who are like him; but works deliverance from death to those who repent of their wickedness and believe upon Him."⁶⁷

It will be observed that again "destroy" is equated with "death."

6. "TORMENT" NOT IDENTICAL WITH "DESTRUCTION."—Several chapters are then devoted to the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ and the predictions of His resurrection (chapter 106), the conversion of the Gentiles predicted by Micah (chapter 109), and the rest of Micah's prophecy not fulfilled at the first advent, which shall be completed at His second coming, when "He shall come from heaven with glory," when, "together with the most righteous, and only spotless and sinless Christ, we are taken away out of the earth."⁶⁸ Then in chapter 111, on the two advents, Justin remarks: "For this is, was, and shall be the strength of Him alone, whose name every power dreads, being very much tormented because they shall be destroyed by Him."⁶⁹

That is, they are "much tormented" now, because they will later be "destroyed" at the Second Advent.

7. THE RESURRECTED FACE CONTRASTING DESTINIES.—IN

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 88, p. 243. Hudson says, "should think proper" (*op. cit.*, p. 317).

⁶⁷ Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho*, chap. 100, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 249.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 110, pp. 253, 254.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 111, p. 254.

chapter 117 the climax is reached, and the separation is portrayed:

"He [Christ] shall raise all men from the dead, and appoint *some* to be incorruptible, immortal, and free from sorrow in the everlasting and imperishable kingdom; but shall send *others* away to the everlasting punishment of fire."⁶⁰

In the light of this he exhorts men "to repent before the great day of judgment come."⁶¹

Reverting to the fall, condemnation, and death of man, Justin says his "discourse" was intended—

"to prove to you that the Holy Ghost reproaches men because they were made like God, free from suffering and death, provided that they kept His commandments, and were deemed deserving of the name of His sons, and yet they, becoming like Adam and Eve, work out death for themselves."⁶²

And he warns that each shall be "by himself judged and condemned like Adam and Eve."

Coming finally, in chapter 130, to "The Conversion of the Gentiles," Justin states:

"We know from Isaiah that the members [*kōla*, "limbs"] of those who have transgressed shall be consumed by the worm and unquenchable fire, remaining immortal [*athanata*, "deathless"]; so that they become a spectacle to all flesh."⁶³

As to the expression "remaining immortal ["deathless"]," scholarly Dr. Beecher makes this significant observation:

"No stress can be laid on the word deathless (*athanata*), for it simply denotes the fact that, during the time of exposure to the fire, the bodies cannot die, but not that they cannot be annihilated by God, at such time as he shall see fit."⁶⁴

Such is the testimony of Justin's *Dialogue*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 117, p. 257.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 118, p. 258.

⁶² *Ibid.*, chap. 124, p. 262.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, chap. 130, pp. 264, 265.

⁶⁴ Beecher, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

Tatian, Theophilus, and Melito— Continue Conditionalist Witness

I. Tatian—The Soul Is “Not Immortal” but “Mortal”

TATIAN (c. A.D. 110-172), likewise a Christian apologist, was born in Assyria. He mastered the classical Graeco-Roman culture of the day. In his writings he quoted from ninety-three classic authors, making use of the knowledge gained from his extensive travels and wide reading. As a strolling philosopher (Aristotelian) he came to Rome, the center of the intelligentsia of the time. At first he was an eager student of heathen literature and devoted himself to the study of philosophy. But he found no satisfaction in the bewildering maze of Greek speculation. So he became a pupil of Justin Martyr, and was won to Christianity, soon becoming a teacher and an apologist for the Christian faith. And Justin, as we have seen, was a Conditionalist.

The facts of Tatian's personal life are scant, but after the death of Justin (c. A.D. 165) he returned to Syria. And for some two hundred years his writings were highly regarded in the Syrian Church. As an apologist he exhibited a marked “abhorrence of pagan abominations,” recognizing no truth in heathen philosophy. He was a prolific writer, his *Diatessaron* being the earliest harmony of the Gospels to be produced. It was used in the Syrian Church until the fifth century.

It was, however, Tatian's *Oratio ad Graecos* (Address to the Greeks)—an unsparing exposure of the enormities of paganism, probably written after Tatian's association with Justin

Martyr, and largely sharing his teacher's views—that brought him fame. In this treatise Tatian urgently invites his contemporaries to examine and accept the light of Christianity in contrast with the darkness of heathenism.¹ He stresses belief in one God, the Creator and First Cause, with the Logos as the Creator of the world. Man was made that he might have a part with God and attain to immortality.

God lives in man now through the operation of the Holy Spirit, for the fall of man necessitated renewal by the Divine Spirit. Longings for God remain in the soul, and man may turn back to God through the exercise of the God-given freedom of the will. But by the same will he can also turn away from God. Tatian was strongly against the materialistic pantheism of the Stoics.

Regrettably, in his old age he adopted peculiar views and fell into certain sad extravagances. The luster created by his Apology was tarnished as he became entangled in the toils of Gnosticism. At the same time Montanism was elsewhere "rising like a fog in the marshes," as someone has aptly phrased it. But Tatian invented some of the terminology that Tertullian developed. He adopted a stern asceticism and a depreciation of marriage, which became established in the Latin Church. He founded the ascetic sect known as the Tatianists, or Encratites (The Self-Controlled), practicing many austerities and holding to a rigid morality.

II. Tatian's Confession of Faith on Soul, Here, and Hereafter

But before his digression, after dealing with the claims and the errors of the Greek philosophers and Greek polytheism, Tatian tells how Christians worship the one true God, without beginning and without end; how they hold to the doctrine of the creation of the world, and of man; how they believe in the fall of man, and in the Christian view of the resurrection;

¹ See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Shape of Death* (1962), chapter on Tatian.

and how the sin of man is not due to fate, but to man's free will. Tatian then launches into the question of the claimed immortality of the soul (chapter thirteen), and the deception, depravity, and severe punishment of the demons.

1. NONEXISTENT IN DEATH, EXISTENT AGAIN THROUGH RESURRECTION.—Taking himself as an example, Tatian held that man came into being from a state of "not existing," prior to birth—a "*state of nothingness*." He came into being, or existence, through birth. In death, "existing no longer," he is "seen no longer." *But through the resurrection* (the subject of chapter six), from this period of nonexistence, Tatian declares, "*I shall exist again*."

And, as before birth, he "was not," so in death—whether martyred through fire, with ashes "dispersed through rivers and seas, or torn in pieces by wild beasts"—he is "laid up," as it were, in the "storehouses" of his Lord, who will "restore" him to life through resurrection. Here is Tatian's full statement:

"For just as, not existing before I was born, I knew not who I was, and only existed in the potentiality (*hupostasis*) of fleshly matter, but being born, after a former state of nothingness, I have obtained through my birth a certainty of my existence; in the same way, having been born, and through death existing no longer, and seen no longer, I shall exist again, just as before I was not, but was afterwards born."²

Then he adds that, though after death others may not know where they are "stored up," yet "God the Sovereign, when He pleases [at the resurrection], will restore the substance [the body] that is visible to Him alone to its pristine condition."³ The language is unmistakable—in death there is no more knowledge than there was before a man was born. In other words, he teaches the unconscious state of man in death—a period of nonexistence, to be broken by the resurrection. Then he exists again.

2. SIN AND DEATH COME THROUGH FREE CHOICE.—In chap-

² Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, chap. 6, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 67.

³ *Ibid.*

ter seven, "The Fall of Man," Tatian says that God created man "an image of immortality," without sin or corruption, that he "might have the immortality principle also." The Logos was also the "Framer of angels," who were free to act as they chose. Man, with the same freedom, is to be "brought to perfection" through his "freedom of choice." Thus the bad will be justly punished, while the just will receive their reward. Thus, "such is the constitution of things in reference to angels and men." It is therefore not fate, but the "choice of free agents," that determines the future. Thus it was that through sin man became mortal.⁴ This latter point concerning fate is amplified in chapter eleven, "The Sin of Men Due Not to Fate, but to Free-Will." Here, he says, because of the Fall there is "one death for all." Then comes Tatian's appeal:

"Die to the world, repudiating the madness that is in it. Live to God, and by apprehending Him lay aside your old nature. We were not created to die, but we die by our own fault. Our free-will has destroyed us; we who were free have become slaves; we have been sold through sin. Nothing evil has been created by God; we ourselves have manifested wickedness; but we, who have manifested it, are able again to reject it."⁵

3. SOUL "NOT ITSELF IMMORTAL," BUT "MORTAL."—Tatian's unequivocal declaration that the soul is not innately, inherently immortal appears in chapter thirteen. Yet it is possible "not to die" forevermore. Twice the determinative "if" is introduced. "If" it sins it dies, and is "dissolved with the body," yet it "rises again at last at the end of the world." But "if" it acquires a saving knowledge of God, it "dies not"—in the eternal second death—though "for a time it be dissolved." The soul is not of itself light, but "darkness." The light comes from God. Here again is Tatian's full statement:

"The soul is *not in itself immortal, O Greeks, but mortal*. Yet it is possible for it not to die. *If*, indeed, it knows not the truth, it dies, and is dissolved with the body, but rises again at last at the end of the world with the body, receiving death by punishment in immortality. But, again, *if* it acquires the knowledge of God, it dies not, although for a time it be dissolved. In itself it is darkness, and there is nothing luminous in it. And

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, pp. 67, 68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, pp. 69, 70.

this is the meaning of the saying, 'The darkness comprehendeth not the light.' For the soul does not preserve the spirit, but is preserved by it, and the light comprehends the darkness."⁶

Everything depends on the relation of the soul to the Divine Spirit. However, "The Spirit of God is not with all," but takes up His abode only "with those who live justly."⁷

It is to be noted that the phrases "punishment in immortality," and later "painful with immortality," deviate from the phraseology of the New Testament. There only the simple term "immortality" and its equivalents "incorruptibility" and "eternal life" are used to describe the eternal state of the blessed. So we see Tatian is beginning to employ, and approach, the language of Plato, with which he was familiar.

4. PUNISHMENT OF DEMONS VERSUS PUNISHMENT OF MEN.—In chapter fourteen ("The Demons Shall Be Punished More Severely Than Men") Tatian declares that the demons "do not die like men," but will suffer greater punishment. They will "not partake of everlasting life" and "blessed immortality." They will have greater punishment, owing to their "boundless existence." He uses the new expression "painful with immortality."⁸

And in chapter sixteen Tatian observes:

"But from us the things which are in the world are not hidden, and the divine is easily apprehended by us if the power that *makes* souls immortal visits us."⁹

5. PAGAN CONFUSION VERSUS CHRISTIAN CONSISTENCY AND TRUTH.—Discussing, in chapter twenty-five, the quarrels of the philosophers—those that follow the doctrines of Plato, Epicurus, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and Pherecydes—Tatian states that Aristotle "impugns the immortality of the soul." But the doctrines of these philosophers "clash with one another" in fatal disharmony. One says, "The world is indestructible," but

⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 70. (Italics supplied.)

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, p. 71.

⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 72.

Tatian warns, "It is to be destroyed." One says there will be "many conflagrations," while Tatian maintains that it will come "once for all." The philosophers say that "the soul alone is endowed with immortality," while Tatian holds that, through the resurrection, the "flesh also" will be "endowed with it." Here is his full statement:

"One of you asserts that God is body, but I assert that He is without body; that the world is indestructible, but I say that it is to be destroyed; that a conflagration will take place at various times, but I say that it will come to pass once for all; that Minos and Rhadamanthus are judges, but I say that God Himself is Judge; that the soul alone is endowed with immortality, but I say that the flesh also is endowed with it."¹⁰

That was Tatian's concise testimony as to the nature of man, written when associated with Justin and sharing his views. The pattern of his eschatology is thus evident—at the catastrophic end of the world come the resurrection of the righteous and the bestowal of immortality.

6. PLACE TRUST IN SCRIPTURE; FOLLOW "FATHER OF IMMORTALITY."—He closes, in chapter twenty-nine, with an account of his conversion. After trying out the foibles of pagan philosophy, he sought how he "might be able to discover the truth." Then he found the Old Testament Scriptures and was—

"led to put faith in these by the unpretending cast of the language, the inartificial character of the writers, the foreknowledge displayed of future events, the excellent quality of the precepts, and the declaration of the government of the universe as centred in one Being."¹¹

Thus he was "taught of God," and rescued from error. So, he says, he put away his former errors concerning the hereafter, believing that wickedness will finally be destroyed. This was the "hidden treasure" that Tatian found.¹² And this true philosophy, revealed by Moses, is older than that of Homer and the Greeks (chapter thirty-one). So he concludes by touching again upon God as the Father of immortality.

"For having renounced the popular and earthly, and obeying the com-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, p. 76.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 29, p. 77.

¹² *Ibid.*, chap. 30, p. 77.



Tatian—Soul Not Immortal but Mortal; Nonexistent in Death; Again Existent Through Resurrection.



Theophilus—Man Created a Candidate for Immortality; to Seek for Immortality.

mands of God, and following the law of the Father of immortality, we reject everything which rests upon human opinion."¹³

That is the witness of Tatian's testimony.

III. Theophilus of Antioch—Man Created a Candidate for Immortality

It will be remembered that it was at Antioch, in the church raised up by the apostles, that the early followers of Christ were first called Christians.¹⁴ And THEOPHILUS (died *c.* A.D. 180) is listed as becoming the sixth bishop of Antioch, about A.D. 168, in succession to Euodius. According to the records, by the close of the third century Antioch was one of the largest Christian churches in the Roman Empire. The statements of such a leader therefore carry considerable weight in our quest.

¹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 32, p. 78.

¹⁴ Acts 11:22-26.

Theophilus was educated as a pagan, but tells us he was converted to Christianity by the reading of the Scriptures. His numerous writings, extant at the time of Eusebius and Jerome, included a commentary on the Gospels and a treatise against heresies, both of which have been lost. Theophilus' main work, his apology for Christianity, is in the form of a lengthy letter addressed to a pagan friend named Autolytus, an "idolater and scorner of Christians."¹⁶ Theophilus states that he writes as an avowed Christian. This treatise is a detailed examination of the evidences of Christianity derived from Scripture and history, and a careful exposition of Christian doctrines. It was designed to convince Autolytus of the absurdities of paganism and the truth of Christianity. It was a learned work, showing the familiarity of the author with the Greek classics. More important, according to Bishop Coxe, it revealed "a profound acquaintance with the inspired writings."

Theophilus was a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, who was also a Conditionalist. He was likewise a contemporary of Athenagoras, under whom significant departures were appearing. (For Theophilus' chronological and categorical placement, see Tabular Chart F, on page 758.) The evidence is overwhelming that Theophilus did not believe in the innate or inherent immortality of man, holding instead that we are immortalized only by and in Christ. He likewise enunciated another fundamental principle of Conditionalism—that God created Adam neither mortal (that is, certain to die) nor yet immortal (that is, certain not to die), but created him capable of either destiny, and master of his own fate. And he further taught that the penalty for sin is terminable—that the true penalty of sin is endless because it is final destruction, from which there is no return.

Theophilus, it should be stated, wrote his apology before the Neoplatonic philosophy, already beginning to find its way into the church, had been widely accepted. It is to be noted that

¹⁶ *Theophilus to Autolytus*, book 1, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 89.

no one censured Theophilus for his avowed position on the nature and destiny of man, for what he taught from so high a post was still the received and orthodox doctrine of many—if not, indeed, still the majority view at that time. But the rising tide of a radically different concept had already set in, destined ere long to overwhelm the earlier position of the Apostolic Fathers. The turning point in this area of the faith of the church was immediately ahead.

IV. Immortality Conferred on Righteous; Destruction Is Fate of Wicked

Assuring Autolycus that the eyes of the soul must be purged in order to see God and understand light, Theophilus presents the incomparable nature and attributes of God—the “father of the righteous” and “judge and punisher of the impious.”¹⁶ God, who established the earth, sustains the universe, and gives light to those who are in darkness, is “without beginning,” and is “unchangeable” and “*immortal*.” He is the “Fashioner and Maker” of all things, “because He is the creator and maker of the universe.”¹⁷ Chapter six is headed “God Is Known by His Works,” in the heavens and on the earth. That is the preamble.

I. MORTALITY “PUT OFF”; IMMORTALITY “PUT ON.”—Coming directly to the immortality issue, chapter seven is titled, “We Shall See God When We Put On Immortality.” After portraying God’s creative power, whose “breath you breathe,” Theophilus appeals to Autolycus to “entrust yourself to the Physician,” who “heals and makes alive.” He then portrays the coming change of those who live “holily, and righteously,” from “mortality” to “immortality,” to take place when we shall see the Immortal One face to face. Here is Theophilus’ clear declaration:

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, pp. 89, 90.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 90.

"When thou shalt have put off the mortal, and put on incorruption, then shalt thou see God worthily. For God will raise thy flesh immortal with thy soul; and then, *having become immortal*, thou shalt see the Immortal, if you now believe on him." ¹⁸

This is, of course, at the resurrection and Second Advent.

2. "SEEK" IMMORTALITY; ESCAPE "ETERNAL PUNISHMENTS."
—Discussing the resurrection, Theophilus states pointedly, to Autolycus, "But you do not believe that the dead are raised." And he adds, "When the resurrection shall take place, then you will believe, whether you will or no." And he reminds Autolycus, "He created you out of nothing, and brought you into existence." ¹⁹ Because "God is able to effect the general resurrection of all men," ²⁰ He is equally able to foretell "things future in the order in which they shall be accomplished."

Theophilus then solemnly declares to his pagan friend, if you "continue unbelieving," you will be convinced, though too late, when "tormented with eternal punishments," which are likewise foretold by the prophets. Then he appeals to Autolycus to escape "the punishments that are to light upon the profane and unbelieving." ²¹ He entreats:

"But do you also, if you please, give reverential attention to the prophetic Scriptures, and they will make your way plainer for escaping the eternal punishments, and obtaining the eternal prizes of God." ²²

His reference is, of course, to immortality in Christ.

Theophilus then plainly declares that "to those who by patient continuance in well-doing *seek* immortality, He will give life everlasting, joy, peace, rest." "But to the unbelieving and despisers," he adds, "there shall be . . . tribulation and anguish, and at the last everlasting fire shall possess [seize] such men." ²³ But he does not say endless punishing. Rather, the fire would make an end of the wicked, when once their retribution for sin was complete. Theophilus, it is to be borne in mind, places "everlasting punishment" along with the doc-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 91.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 91.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 93.

²¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, p. 93.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

trine of nonimmortality of the soul, as did Justin. The true penalty for sin is final death, from which there is no return. Scholarly Frederick A. Freer makes a sound distinction between the "endless loss of life," and the totally different "endless life of loss."²⁴ And this was not a play on words but the statement of a profound truth.

3. PRESENTS FOUNDATIONAL BASES FOR FAITH.—In book two, chapter four, Theophilus cites Plato as teaching that both God and matter are "uncreated" and "unalterable." Therefore, if matter be uncreated and unalterable, it is "equal to God," for "that which is created is mutable and alterable." But Theophilus contends that "out of things that are not He creates and has created things that are."²⁵

In chapter nine ("The Prophets Inspired by the Holy Ghost") Theophilus discusses the role of the prophet, declaring that the prophets were "God-taught," and as "instruments of God" they not only declared the truth regarding "the creation of the world and all other things" but predicted things to come. And because they declared what happened before their day, and "what things are now being fulfilled in our own day: wherefore we are persuaded also concerning the future things that they will fall out, as also the first have been accomplished."²⁶

4. NATURE AND PERIL OF UNFALLEN MAN IN EDEN.—The same inspired prophets declare that "God made all things out of nothing; for nothing is coeval with God."²⁷ Creation week, and the work of each day, including the creation of man, are then presented in chapters eleven to seventeen, based on Genesis 1 and 2. In chapter eighteen "The Creation of Man" is set forth, and then man's placement in Paradise (chapter nineteen), in which state "man became a living soul." Because of this expression, Theophilus says, "By most persons the

²⁴ Frederick A. Freer, *To Live or Not to Live*, p. 87.

²⁵ *Theophilus to Autolytus*, book 2, chap. 4, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 95.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 97.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 98.

soul is called immortal.”²⁸ But this he discusses soon. The conditions of the saved in Paradise are presented in chapter twenty.

Next follows the Genesis account “Of the Fall of Man” (chapter twenty-one)—the Garden and its trees, and the tree of life, from which man was to eat. Provision was thus made for the preservation of life. Only of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was Adam commanded “not to taste.” Here in the Garden man was to perfect character, and to advance and come into “possession of immortality,” for, Theophilus adds, “man had been made a middle nature, neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, but *capable of either.*”²⁹

5. EXPELLED FROM EDEN LEST HE REMAIN IN SIN FOREVER.—Paradise was therefore “intermediate between earth and heaven.” Only the observance of God’s command was required, “lest, disobeying, he should destroy himself, as indeed he did destroy himself, by sin.”³⁰ Then follows chapter twenty-five with its declaration that “for the first man, disobedience procured his expulsion from Paradise,” and, “from his disobedience did man draw, as from a fountain, labour, pain, grief, and at last fall a prey to death.”³¹ He was not to live forever in sin.

6. RETURNS TO PARADISE AFTER RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALIZATION.—In chapter twenty-six Theophilus plainly says, concerning man’s expulsion from Paradise, “God showed a great kindness to man in this, that He did not suffer him to remain in sin for ever,” but by “banishment, cast him out of Paradise,” afterward to be “restored.” But Paradise is twice portrayed, the first wherein man was initially placed, and the second, to which he will be restored “*after* the resurrection and judgment.”³² Thus, like a potter’s vessel, man through a flaw became broken, and had to be made over. And he

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 102.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, p. 104.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, p. 104.

³² *Ibid.*, chap. 26, pp. 104, 105.

immediately adds that in the same way man "may rise in the resurrection whole; I mean spotless, and righteous, and immortal."³³

So in God's call to Adam in Eden, "He gave him an opportunity of repentance and confession."³⁴ Thus God provided the way to immortality.

7. IMMORTALITY A REWARD, NOT AN ORIGINAL POSSESSION. —The short chapter twenty-seven, on "The Nature of Man," is so vital to our quest that we quote it in entirety—simply breaking it into two sections. First, Theophilus deals with man's nature at Creation, in which he repeats and emphasizes the thought of the sentence quoted from chapter twenty-four—"For man had been made . . . neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, but capable of either," thus with alternative destinies open before him.

In this view he is followed by Irenaeus, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Nemesis, in the second, fourth, and sixth centuries. It is a recurring thought that God did not arbitrarily create man mortal or immortal, but capable of either, and thus a candidate for either, according to his choice and action. Theophilus here expands this thought:

"But some one will say to us, Was man made by nature mortal? Certainly not. Was he, then, immortal? Neither do we affirm this. But one will say, Was he, then, nothing? Not even this hits the mark. *He was by nature neither mortal nor immortal.* For if He had made him immortal from the beginning, He would have made him God [like]. Again, if He had made him mortal, God would seem to be the cause of his death. Neither, then, immortal nor yet mortal did He make him, *but*, as we have said above, *capable of both*; so that if he should incline to the things of immortality, keeping the commandment of God, he should receive as *reward* from Him immortality, and should become God [like];³⁵ but if, on the other hand, he should turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he should himself be the cause of death to himself."³⁶

So according to Theophilus man was not created immortal, but *immortable*, or *immortizable*, as some phrase it. And immortality is a reward, not a natural right.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.
³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Genētai theos*, literally, "become a god."
³⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 27, p. 105.

8. MAN CHOOSES EITHER EVERLASTING LIFE, OR DEATH.

—The second half of this little chapter deals with man's freedom of the will, and his responsibility for his own fate—because of obedience and resultant life everlasting and incorruption, through the resurrection, or of disobedience and death. Because of disobedience man forfeited immortality. But in mercy God gave opportunity to acquire "life everlasting" through obedience to the gospel and the law of God. Theophilus continues:

"For God made man free, and with power over himself. That, then, which man brought upon himself through carelessness and disobedience, this God now vouchsafes to him *as a gift* through His own philanthropy and pity, when men obey Him. For as man, disobeying, drew death upon himself; so, obeying the will of God, he who desires is able to *procure* for himself life everlasting. For God has given us a law and holy commandments; and every one who keeps these can be saved, and, obtaining the resurrection, can inherit incorruption [*"immortality"*]." ³⁷

God therefore conferred upon man the supreme privilege of liberty, but liberty cannot exist without the necessity of choice—choice of life or death. An enforced immortality would nullify that divinely implanted freedom.

9. RIGHTEOUS TO ESCAPE ETERNAL PUNISHMENTS.—Chapter twenty-eight touches on Eve's tempter, Satan the serpent, the author of sin. He became "demon" and "dragon," on account of his . . . revolting from God," for at first Satan "was an angel." ³⁸ Theophilus then tells of the aftermath of man's expulsion from Eden, revealed through "the holy prophets." ³⁹ He declares that God "did not abandon mankind, but gave a law, and sent holy prophets" to draw men back to God. And he adds that "he who acts righteously shall escape the eternal punishments, and be thought *worthy of the eternal life from God.*" ⁴⁰

10. WICKED CONSUMED IN FINAL CONFLAGRATION.—He alludes, in chapter thirty-seven, to the principle that "evil-doers must necessarily be punished *in proportion* to their deeds,"

³⁷ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

³⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, p. 105.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 33, p. 107.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 34, p. 108. (Italics supplied.)

and then mentions the coming "conflagration of the world," in accordance with the "testimony of the prophets." "In chapter thirty-eight he adds: "Concerning the burning up of the world, Malachi the prophet foretold: 'The day of the Lord cometh as a burning oven, and shall *consume* all the wicked.'" "41

11. GOD'S CARE FOR THE DEAD.—Theophilus states that the prophets, poets, and philosophers "have clearly taught both concerning righteousness, and judgment, and punishment, and also concerning providence, that God cares for us, not only for the living" but "also for those that are dead." He cites Solomon's allusion to God's "care taken of thy bones," and Hosea's declaration, "The ways of the Lord are right."⁴²

That is the testimony of Theophilus. Book three adds little. Chapter seven alludes to Plato's repeated assertions on "the unity of God and of the soul of man, asserting that the soul is immortal," and to the great pagan philosopher's inconsistency in holding to the transmigration of souls, in which "some souls pass into other men, and that others take their departure into irrational animals" (a "wolf, or a dog, or an ass"), calling such a teaching "dreadful and monstrous."⁴³ But Bishop Theophilus is clear, consistent, and scriptural.

V. Melito of Sardis—Death a Long Sleep; Immortality Regained Through Christ

MELITO (d. c. A.D. 190), little known and less quoted bishop of Sardis, was an early apologist.⁴⁴ According to Eusebius,⁴⁵ he was a prolific writer, authoring some sixteen or eighteen treatises. But the majority of these have long since vanished except for scanty fragments. Dealing with the doctrinal

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 37, p. 109.

⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. 38, p. 110.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 7, p. 113.

⁴⁵ A. Cleveland Coxe, Preface to "Melito the Philosopher," in *ANF* vol. 8, pp. 750, 751; Robert R. Williams, *A Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church Fathers* (1960), pp. 36, 42-44; *ODCC*, art., "Melito," p. 884; J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 510.

⁴⁶ Eusebius, *Church History*, book 4, chap. 26, in *NPNF*, 2d series, vol. 1, pp. 203-205.

questions of the day, Melito is best known for his *Apology*, written to Emperor Marcus Aurelius about A.D. 176.⁴⁷ Melito visited the East, and seems to have met Clement.⁴⁸

1. ETERNAL CHRIST WAS CREATOR OF MAN.—Melito was deeply imbued with a sense of the deity of Christ, repeatedly calling Him both God, and man in the highest sense, the Creator of the universe and of man, and insisting that in Him all things subsist. Here are pertinent samples:

"By His power doth everything subsist. This Being is in no sense made, nor did He ever come into being; but He existed from all eternity, and will *continue to exist* for ever and ever."⁴⁹

"Christ, who is veritably God the Word *existing* before all time."⁵⁰

"This is He who made the heaven and the earth, and in the beginning, together with the Father, fashioned man."⁵¹

"The deeds done by Christ after His baptism . . . gave indication and assurance to the world of the Deity hidden in His flesh. For, being at once both God and perfect man likewise, He gave us sure indications of His two natures"—"His Deity" and "His humanity."⁵²

"He was the true God existing before all ages."⁵³

Melito's soundness on the Godhead is thus attested.

2. COMING FLOOD OF FIRE TO DESTROY EARTH.—Testifying to the emperor as to the mystery of "why this world was made, and why it passes away, and why the body exists, and why it falls to decay, and why it continues," Melito says, "thou canst not know until thou hast raised thy head from this sleep in which thou art sunk, and hast opened thine eyes."⁵⁴

Melito warns of the coming "flood of fire" that will come upon "all the world." Then he adds:

"So also it will be at the last time: there shall be a flood of fire, and the earth shall be burnt up, together with its mountains; and *mankind shall be burnt up* . . . ; but the just shall be preserved from wrath."⁵⁵

3. CHRIST DIED THAT WE MIGHT BE RAISED.—In his discourse "On the Soul and Body" Melito eloquently says that Christ was "born man" that "He might save man, and gather

⁴⁷ Philip Carrington, *The Early Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 226.

⁴⁸ Coxe, *op. cit.*, p. 750.

⁴⁹ "Remains of the Second and Third Centuries," in *ANF*, vol. 8, p. 751.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 759.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 758.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 754.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 760.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 755, 756. (Italics supplied.)

together those members of His which death had scattered.”⁶⁶ To this end “the Immortal dieth, and answereth not a word; the Celestial is laid in the grave.” “When our Lord arose from the place of the dead, and trampled death under foot, and bound the strong one, and set man free, then did the whole creation see clearly that for man’s sake the Judge was condemned.” He “died in order that He might give life, was laid in the grave that He might raise *from the dead*.”⁶⁷ “He that hung up the earth *in space* was *Himself* hanged up; He that fixed the heavens was fixed *with nails*; He that bore up the earth was borne up on a tree.”⁶⁸ But He is risen “from the place of the dead, and ascended to the height of heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.”⁶⁹

4. SLEEP OF DEATH A LONG SILENCE.—In the papyrus containing Melito’s “Homily on the Passion,” or more correctly “On the Passover” (*Peri Pascha*), discovered largely in its entirety in 1940 (Papyrus Bodmer XIII, 1960), in chapter twenty-five Melito says: “The angel of death tells the first born in Egypt that to Him belongs the long silence . . . the silence of death.”⁷⁰

And in chapter thirty-nine he adds that, though Adam and Eve lived a long time after their expulsion from Eden, the heritage they left their children was “not immortality but corruption.”⁷¹

Because of its pertinence let us note it in greater detail. This rarely cited papyrus codex, translated by Dr. Campbell Bonner, of the University of Michigan, is of special interest because it is not the customary contemporary defense of Christianity against paganism, Judaism, or heresy. Instead, it is a fairly complete early sermon by a respected leader for the “edification of the Church.”

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 756.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ See C. Bonner, *Studies and Documents* (ed. by K. and Silva Lake), XIX, 1940. Cf. *ODCC*, p. 884.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 758.

⁷¹ See E. J. Wallasz, “Melito’s Homily on the Passion,” in *J.T.S.* xlv (1943), pp. 41-52.

5. DEATH AND DISSOLUTION FROM DISOBEDIENCE.—Melito here deals with the dual nature of the Passion—(1) the ancient institution of the chosen people; (2) illuminated and interpreted in the sacrifice of Christ and the divine plan for the salvation of mankind. The type of old is presented as a preparation for the new and eternal reality. Melito again stresses the person of Christ and the new dispensation. Born as a son, sacrificed as a lamb, suffering and dying as a man, He has risen as God, being by nature “both God and man.”⁶² And we are recipients both of His grace and life. Originally, man, created in a state of innocence, had only to obey in order to “enjoy it always.”⁶³

The forbidden fruit and the transgression, the temptation and the Fall and the dire consequences, are then dwelt upon, along with “the inevitable penalty—death and dissolution.”⁶⁴ To redeem man the mystic Passover is consummated in the sacrifice of Christ. Melito deals with the pre-existence of Christ, His earthly life and death, and why and how He was put to death, as Creator and Deliverer.⁶⁵

6. CORRUPTION AND DESTRUCTION FROM DISOBEDIENCE.—In chapter twenty-five of the text, dilating on the death of the “firstborn,” as mentioned, Melito twice speaks of “the long silence of death . . . the silence of death.”⁶⁶ And he comments (in chapter thirty-one) on how “the death of the sheep [that was slain] became the life of the people,” typifying the Lord (chapter thirty-two). Turning in chapters forty-eight and forty-nine, to Creation, the primal pair in the Garden were declared “capable of good or evil,” and coming to the prohibition as regards the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” Melito takes up the warning against death for disobedience, and tells how Adam “returned to earth,” and bequeathed death to mankind as an “inheritance.” Here is his expressive statement. Adam left them—

⁶² “The Homily on the Passion by Melito Bishop of Sardis,” in *Studies and Documents*, XII, by Kirsopp and Silva Lake (1940), edited by Campbell Bonner, pp. 3-5, 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 168.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170 (chap. 25).

"not incorruptibility but corruption, not honor but dishonor, not freedom but slavery, not sovereignty but oppression, *not life but death, not salvation but destruction.* And strange and terrible was the destruction of men upon the earth."⁶⁷

7. RANSOMS AND RESTORES FROM GRAVE.—As a result "Sin" became the "co-worker of death." And, Melito adds (in chapters fifty-four and fifty-five), "Upon every soul Sin sets its mark in *all alike devoted she to Death.*" Note his graphic description:

"So all flesh fell into the power of Sin, and every body into the power of Death, and every soul was driven forth from its house of flesh. That which was taken from the earth was resolved into earth, and that which was given of God was shut up in Hades [gravedom] . . . for man was separated into his parts by Death."⁶⁸

He was "captive under the shadows of death."

Then in chapter sixty-seven comes the "mystery" of redemption through Christ, as He "ransomed us from ruin" and "freed us from slavery to the devil."⁶⁹ Thus man is "raised from the grave below to the heights of the heavens."⁷⁰ Thus our Creator and Redeemer, who "fixed the stars in heaven," restores us.⁷¹ Thus He makes "the dead to live again" and raises up "him who was buried."⁷² He is the Christ who "put down death." Thus "He brought man home, safely to the heights of heaven."⁷³

Such is a contemporary Conditionalist presentation of the times—brief but expressive.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173 (chap. 49). (Italics supplied.)

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174 (chap. 55).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 175 (chap. 67).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176 (chap. 70).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 180 (chap. 101).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, chap. 102.

Gnostic-Manichaean Perversions Compel Restatement of Truth

One of the earliest and gravest of doctrinal perversions to imperil the Early Church and its pristine faith was the menace of Gnosticism. This development was most prominent in Egypt and Syria. But in Rome, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and eastern Persia fruitful soil was likewise found for its propagation. And it not only flourished widely but proved to be exceedingly persistent. In fact, it was overcome only after some three centuries of stubborn controversy. It confronted the world with a whole battery of new terms that connoted alien concepts. It was a neopagan revival with tremendous virility and persistence. Its significance therefore needs to be sensed.

In time the church defeated Gnosticism, but the marks of the adversary were left indelibly upon her. Plagued by this, and other departures that followed—especially Neoplatonism—the church never went back to her primitive form of teaching. To clarify her position before the world she felt compelled to crystallize and to creedalize her faith. But as a result, among other departures, alien teachings regarding the nature and destiny of the soul came to be adopted by the majority, and were retained in large sections of the church from the third century onward. This constitutes a compelling reason for this little survey of Gnosticism.

The Gnostic movement professed to have the answer to the baffling problem of the origin and destiny of the *universe*, especially the inception and disposition of *evil*. As to its dis-

tinctive teachings, three major concepts were elemental in this strange development. These were: (1) a Supreme Being, the Absolute Eternal God, unconnected with matter and incapable of being affected by it; (2) matter, also eternal, produced by emanations instead of creation, *matter being the source of all evil* and opposed to God; and (3) a series of intermediate beings between the two. From these elementals sprang a host of errors and evils profoundly affecting the subject of our quest.

I. Scope of Gnosticism's Sinister Heresies

Only as one realizes the nature of the subtle sophistries and basic errors of these movements that arose to imperil the Early Church is it possible to understand what the early apologists were actually fighting against, and why, and the significance of their arguments, the logic of their reasonings, and the expressions sometimes employed. This alone explains why they wrote so much on the origin, nature, and destiny of *man*, as well as on the deity, the redeeming power, and the life-giving prerogatives of *Christ*, and His position as judge.

They felt impelled to expose fundamental fallacies, as well as to declare primary truths. It is therefore necessary, at this point, to pause long enough to survey the ramifications of Gnosticism—the first great heretical movement of major dimensions, whose postulates were a direct attack on the primary positions of the subapostolic church, as reflected by the Apostolic Fathers. If not checked Gnosticism would ultimately overthrow, or at least gravely confuse, the primitive beliefs of the church on the Godhead, Christ, Creation, the fall and redemption of man, his ultimate resurrection and immortalization, as well as the final disposition of sin and sinners. To the ramifications of this early crisis we therefore now address ourselves, as we turn the spotlight on the multiple subversions of Gnosticism.

1. BLIGHTING CHARACTERISTICS OF GNOSTICISM.—Gnosticism (from the Greek *gnōsis*, "knowledge") stood for salvation

by "knowledge." The Gnostics claimed to know the mysteries of the universe, this knowledge being *esoteric* (private or secret) rather than *exoteric* (public and open), and transmitted by tradition—of which they claimed to be the special custodians. In its pagan form Gnosticism antedated the Christian Era, borrowing its formula from various ethnic religions and having a distinctly pantheistic tinge. Later, borrowing certain additional terminology from Christianity, it took on a "Christian" form, and by the second century A.D. had become highly aggressive. Professing to solve the great questions of the universe, it had a certain subtle appeal.

Gnosticism led the way in the amalgamation of pagan concepts with Christian thought and terminology. Its fondness for mysteries, or secret rites, was derived principally from Hellenistic and Egyptian mysteries. And its elaborate and pompous liturgical service stimulated a taste for similar ornateness in the regular churches. It made definite inroads among Christians—espoused by some but bitterly fought by others, especially by Irenaeus of Gaul. Because of these exposures, by the fifth century Gnosticism had spent its force.¹

2. STRANGE MEDLEY OF BORROWED ELEMENTS.—The Gnostic movement was a syncretism, a composite of various borrowed elements. It drew its concepts from pagan philosophies and Oriental mythologies, as well as Jewish cabalistic sources, and, as mentioned, finally drafted upon certain Christian terms and teachings. It combined the esoteric philosophy of Egypt with the deadly Dualism common to Zoroastrianism, old Babylonianism, Platonism, and even the Jewish cabala. And it drafted upon the Brahmic concept of successive emanations from the Absolute Being—these emanations being the workings of the Eternal One, supposedly overflowing from the Central Being, without decreasing the reality or the fullness of that source.

¹ Leading authorities on Gnosticism include Seviney, Barrie, Lea, Rust, Kraeling, Ritter, Möller, Gieseler, Neander, Hase, Schaff, Hilgenfeld, King, Harnack, Mansel, Bunsen, Lightfoot, Pressense, Angus, Case, Moehlman. More recent is R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*.

Gnosticism also adopted the Buddhist antagonism of spirit and matter and the unreality of derived existence. It similarly incorporated the Buddhist concept of a god in process of development, and spiritual souls longing to be freed from the bonds of matter and raised above the things of sense—and ultimately being reunited with the divine Source of Life.

It laid hold on the Platonic idea of a god withdrawn entirely within itself, intelligible only to the initiated, with an eternal antagonism between god the spirit and the lower world of matter. It similarly took over the idea of a fall of spiritual beings through this material element. It presented a theory of the universe based on *speculation* instead of revelation—how it was originally projected, and how it will finally be restored to harmony. Harnack defined Gnosticism as the “Hellenization of Christianity.”

Its philosophical basis centered on the origin of evil, blending Pythagorean and Platonic concepts with those of Philo of Alexandria² concerning the Supreme Being. Its chief practical concern was the knowledge of God and the origin and destiny of mankind. Central in emphasis was this *gnōsis*, by which the spiritual element in man might receive redemption. It was a scheme of salvation. The Gnostics claimed a knowledge higher than that of common men, founded on intuition rather than historical evidence or logical reasoning.

Draft was likewise made upon the Pythagorean notion of numbers, and the Parsi conception of the divine essence as light, and a Dualism in which God is continually subjected to the aggressions of matter, and in which the principle of goodness and light is in unending conflict with the principle of evil and darkness. But the brightness of the light decreases continually, and loses itself in the surrounding darkness. So the power of the Absolute expresses itself in an increasingly diluted form.

² Philo, influenced by Neoplatonism, Neo-Pythagoreanism, and old Egyptian theosophy, also exalted the Supreme Being above contact with the visible world. To him the Old Testament *Logos* was a derived being. Philo employed the allegorical method of exegesis, holding that the literal meaning was worthless.

These derivations were all so evident as to indicate their sources. They constituted a strange medley, confusing to the world and perilous to the church. Moehlman calls it a "syncretistic whirlpool."³ Now to certain definitions.

3. "DEMIURGE," "EMANATIONS," AND "AEONS."—Gnosticism made sharp distinctions between the remote and unknowable Supreme Being, or Great God (the Source of all), and the "Demiurge,"⁴ believed to be one of the "Aeons"⁵ resulting from "emanations."⁶ The Demiurge, as the Creator-God, was held to be the immediate source of the visible world and the originator of matter. Finite existence was accounted for as a progressive falling away from the original perfection. The Demiurge therefore occupied an intermediate place between the Supreme God and the material world. But while the Gnostics held that he created and ruled the world, they claimed that he was actually in rebellion against the Supreme God. The Demiurge was not originally evil, only limited and imperfect. But evil sprang from the defects of his work and plans. Nevertheless, he transformed the chaos of matter into the organized universe, which they averred is under his control.

According to these concepts the Demiurge created man, but could only impart to him his own weak principle—the sensuous soul. Only the highest and really Great God could impart the divine rational soul. But the Demiurge, while claim-

³ Conrad H. Moehlman, "Gnosticism," in Vergilius Ferm, *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 300.

⁴ *Demiurge*—the English form of the Greek word for "craftsman," used by Plato for the World-Framer in his account of the formation of the visible world. Hence, it was Platonic in origin. It was later employed by Greek Christian writers simply of God as Creator. The Gnostics used the term disparagingly for the inferior Creator-God of the Old Testament.

⁵ *Aeon*—meaning "self-existing," one of a group of self-existing spiritual powers progressively emanated from, and subsisting coeternally with, the Eternal Being. These Aeons form the *Pleroma* (plenitude or fullness), or invisible spiritual world, and the Divine Being from which they emanated, in contradistinction to the *Kenōma* (chaotic void), or visible material world. They thus constitute the intermediaries, and give form to other substance. The latest and highest Aeons were believed to be Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The number of Aeons differed in different systems—sometimes twelve, as in the planetary relations; or thirty, as in the years of Christ; or 365, as in the days of the year; or just indefinite. These Aeons embodied truth, intelligence, faith, hope, love, wisdom, et cetera.

⁶ *Emanation* (Latin, *emano*, "to flow out"), meaning issuing from its source. Used by the Gnostics to indicate the process of creation, conceived of as a series of "effluxes" flowing forth from the Absolute God and forming a "multiplicity" of created beings, all things coming from the First Reality or Source. It was a process of descent from the perfect to the less perfect, the First Cause remaining unchanged. And according to Valentinus the emanations were in pairs, male and female, and involving generation.

ing to be the highest god could not bring his creatures to the true knowledge of God, and was really only the god of the Jews, and to some extent that of Christianity. Thus Jesus, coming as the promised Messiah, could only prepare the way for redemption. Such were some of its sinister aspects broadcast to the pagan world as the Gnostic concept of "Christianity," and spread among Christians to confuse.

4. MANKIND CAST INTO THREE BASIC CATEGORIES.—Specifically as concerns man, Gnosticism held that there is a spark of the Divine in the constitution of some. And through *gnōsis* this spiritual element may be released from its material environment, and assured of a return to its home in the Divine Being. Thus the origin, nature, and destiny of man were tied inextricably with the vagaries of Gnosticism. That, we would emphasize, is why we must examine it. It was basic with Gnosticism that the Demiurge was himself subject to imperfections, and the world he created was a fallen world.

Man, they held, partakes of three elements in varying proportions—the Supreme God, the Demiurge, and matter. In consequence, all men are divided into three categories—the spiritual, psychical, and fleshly—higher or lower according to the predominance of the elements of deity within them, and in proportion to their freedom from matter, which is ever and only evil. Note the distinctions: (1) The highest (or *spiritual*) class comprises those who share largely in the nature of the truest Aeons, and are the only ones capable of attaining perfection; (2) the intermediate (or *psychical*) group who have the nature of the Demiurge, and to some extent have power to rise above the debasement of matter; and (3) the lowest (or *fleshly*) category, constituting those who are wholly under the control of matter, and will share its tragic fate. Such cannot be saved, for their nature is only evil, devoid of any spark of the Divine within them.

They held that historically the *fleshly* was predominant in past paganism, the *psychical* flourished in the Jewish dis-

penetration, and the *spiritual* was now to be found in the Christian dispensation—though with some intermingling. While some Gnostics allowed of no transition from one class to another, others held that such was possible, because of divine communication of special powers. Some of these sought to be saved by faith, faith being considered vastly inferior to *knowledge*. The Gnostics considered themselves as constituting the first, or spiritual, group, regarding their special knowledge as their assurance of immortality, for only the souls of spiritual men are immortal. They were very group conscious, and their salvation would result from their esoteric knowledge and ascetic life.

5. REDEMPTION CONCEIVED OF AS LIBERATION FROM MATTER.—The Gnostic idea of redemption was the notion of the liberation of the spirit from its connection with matter, but it was restricted to the upper two classes. Some, however, held the more liberal view that there were certain favored ones in each group—sparks of light having fallen into the breasts of those sighing for redemption. The work of redemption was consequently the liberation of the spiritual nature in man from the evil material existence by which it is enslaved, thus affording escape into the *Plēroma* (divine fullness). That was one of its most blatant perversions.

6. GNOSTIC DUALISM VERSUS APOSTOLIC MONISM.—The distinctly dualistic concept characterizing Gnosticism was based on pagan ideas accounting for the universe as caused by two eternal and equal but distinct and perpetually conflicting principles—good and evil, spirit and matter, ideal and material, light and darkness. Dualism held that these are the outcome or product of separate and equally ultimate “first causes.” Such a Dualism flourished among the Persians under the names of Ormuzd and Ahriman. And while Dualism was introduced into the church through Gnosticism, it was perpetuated by Manichaeism, as will later be observed. Its ultimate is seen in the contention that makes Satan the chief of an imperishable

kingdom of immortal sinners like himself, in an ever-burning Hell. So it is definitely involved in our quest.

On the contrary, primitive Christianity was Monistic,⁷ asserting that "all that exists" was derived from a single, ultimate Source—the absolute, infinite God of the Old Testament and the New, of whom Paul says, "who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16). Monism involved the thought that the day is coming when evil will be utterly banished from the universe, and God will be "all and in all."

But this leads logically to the concept of the ultimate annihilation of the devil and his followers, both demonic and human, along with the principle and practice of evil. Since God is the sole source of life, all who separate themselves from Him in rebellion are doomed to ultimate death. Thus the annihilation of sin and sinners is the necessary outcome and inevitable consequence of such a concept of sin, whether viewed from the metaphysical, juridical, or moral standpoints.

7. DUALISM INVOLVES ENDLESS DURATION OF WICKED.—The point must not be missed that Gnosticism's dogma of the soul's immortality was based on Dualism. And, granting its premises, the ultimate philosophical consequence of the system seems inescapable. Gnosticism starts with the axiom of the indestructibility of the immortal soul, and the final result of the exercise of human freedom, in persistent revolt, involves the eternal suffering of a certain number of such creatures. It involves the eternal duration of the evil principle, in a state of rebellion against God. Infinity of evil stands in eternal opposition to the infinity of good. That was another of the inevitables of the system that struck at the primitive faith.

8. BLASPHEMOUSLY DENIED DEITY OF CHRIST.—More than that, the deity of Christ was impugned. The Gnostics held that, though Christ was not the highest God, He came as an

⁷ The term *Monism* was coined to express "all that is" in terms of a single source and reality, in denial of the Dualism of the physical and psychical, or body and mind, by postulating a reality transcending those of which both are made.

emissary of the Supreme God, bringing *gnōsis*. But the Gnostics taught that Christ, as a Divine Being, did not assume an actual human body, but either temporarily inhabited a human "Jesus" or merely assumed a phantasmal human appearance. That, of course, was Docetism, noted later. They thus denied the actual deity of Christ, degrading Him to the category of other Aeons of the higher category. This was still another of the vicious aspects of the system that Irenaeus and others felt forced to battle.

9. REJECTED OLD TESTAMENT AND MALIGNED "JEHOVAH."

—Still further, Gnosticism rejected the Old Testament and the Mosaic account of the creation of the world. Adam was regarded as purely mythical. The Gnostics held the pernicious belief that the Jehovah of the Old Testament was the enemy of the true God. Nevertheless, he was the alleged creator of the world and of Hell, holding his captives by error and indulgence. They taught that Christ, though defective, came to rescue those shut up in Hell, and to unmask the wiles and evil character of Jehovah. And Marcion taught that Christ descended into the underworld to release those souls who refused to obey the demons worshiped by the Jews.

Such are some of the leading aspects of the devastating perversions taught by the Gnostic sects. But they become even more sinister when examined in greater detail. It thus becomes increasingly obvious why Christian leaders believed that this colossal system of anti-Christian error must be met in head-on conflict. It was an inescapable part of the struggle we are surveying.

10. LIKE TERMITES ERODING BASIC STRUCTURE.—

We should bear in mind as we progress that Gnosticism was just one—but a weighty one—in a series of disintegrating developments that sought to infiltrate the early Christian Church and subvert its fundamental teachings. These various related heresies might well be likened to termites boring into the basic structure of the temple of Christianity. These all sought to emasculate

the apostolic concepts of God and man, particularly as regards man's nature and destiny. The groundwork was thus laid for further inroads through Platonism and kindred regressive developments in the days to come. That is the tie-in, and why we must scan it. It was one early segment in a vicious circle of circumstances that boded ill for the future integrity of the church.

II. Underlying Unity Despite Wide Diversity

Gnosticism's most conspicuous teachers were Valentinus, Saturninus, Basilides, and Marcion. Carpocrates might also be listed. Confusing diversity marked the teachings of these factional leaders, yet there was an underlying unity. All factions were united, first, in stressing pagan Dualism, and second, in considering themselves spiritual and therefore immortal by nature. The immortality sought by mankind was believed theirs by virtue of the very constitution of their being—an inherent aristocracy, not a gift of divine goodness or one obtained by impartation of divine character.

What the Apostolic and early Ante-Nicene Fathers had insisted was a conferred gift, or grace, all Gnostics regarded as innately theirs. This point is important: They would automatically be saved, they held, because they were spiritual—*irrespective of conduct*. The sinister effect of such a concept of immortality was inevitable. The immortal might even rightly do things sinful for others and not come under condemnation.

Such was the confusing and grossly misleading picture presented to the pagan world by these warring Gnostic factions, all claiming the name of "Christian." Thus all Christians were divided into three categories. Some souls were *spiritual* and sure of salvation because of their special knowledge. Others were recognized as *psychical*, having soul without spirit, whose salvation, if possible, was yet to be effected. Still others were considered *material*, and therefore hopelessly lost. Such was

its fatalism. But this eerie medley becomes more confusing as we note the conflicting views of the factions.

1. VALENTINUS INJECTS "INTERMEDIATE" WAITING PLACE.

—Valentinus, for example, lists man's accepted threefold nature as predominantly material, animal, or spiritual. The first partakes of the body of flesh, which all believed is only evil and doomed to destruction. The second is the imperfect, mundane animal soul. The third, or spiritual soul, is incorporeal like that of the Aeons, and destined to enter the *Plēroma* (abode of the Aeons) in the supermundane sphere, where the primary *Ogdoad* (Ruler) resides.

When the spiritual soul is divested of all animal sin, it is said to be irresistibly drawn back up to the *Plēroma*. But Valentinus, in touching on the survival of the soul after death, injects an "intermediate" waiting place for the soul until admitted to Heaven—a sort of embryonic Purgatory. The material portion passes to destruction, while the animal soul stays with the Demiurge in this intermediate place forever.⁸

Furthermore, Valentinus held yet another pagan feature, drawn from Hinduism—immortality of *things*, as well as of persons. The Hindu philosophy held the immortality of all life, beasts being men *in transitu*. This too was part of Gnosticism. So metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, was likewise involved in its complexities.

2. FANTASTIC DEGRADING NOTIONS OF SATURNINUS.—

Saturninus of Rome, likewise strongly dualistic, held the fantastic notion that the Supreme but Unknowable God created a series of angels and other supernatural beings, which in turn created man. But, as originally formed, man was supposedly a "powerless entity" that wriggled on the ground like a worm, until a divine spark set him on his feet. Saturninus believed the God of the Jews to be one of the Creator-Angels. And he held that the Supreme Father sent Christ to destroy this Jewish

⁸ See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 1, chaps. 7, 8, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 325.

God and to redeem such as were endowed with the divine spark.⁹

3. BASILIDES' "TRANSIT OF SOUL" FROM MITHRAISM.—Basilides, of Syria, stressed that the Supreme God is separated from the world by 365 heavens—ranks of supermundane beings filling the space between the Supreme Being and the world of matter. This world, he held, is under the superintendency of the God of the Jews, who is of the lower rank, and always seeking to subject man to Himself. In order to free men, God sent His *Nous* (Mind), a spiritual being of high rank, into the world, who dwelt in Jesus, though He suffered in appearance only. But man must follow Him to secure freedom from matter, and so rise to the Supreme God. Basilides' philosophy was also pantheistic, one of his designations of God being the "Non-existent" One.¹⁰

The Basilidean doctrine—blending Persian, Hindu, and Neoplatonic ideas—in its view of the descent and ascent of the soul through the heavens, appears to have borrowed this from Mithraism, which embodied such a belief.¹¹ Basilides' strange view was specifically this: The soul of man originated in the *Ogdoad* (eighth heaven, region of the fixed stars). From there it descended to the *Hebdomad* (seventh, or planetary heaven), where it acquired its "psychical nature," and thence to earth, where it took on a carnal or corporeal nature.

On earth the soul of the spiritual man suffers until it obtains release from the body, which disintegrates into dust, while the departed soul ascends to the *Hebdomad*, where its psychical nature is cast off. Thus purified, it ascends to the *Ogdoad*, to dwell with the Great *Archōn* (Ruler) in radiant light. Moreover, on earth the soul, having sinned in a previous life (transmigration), endures punishment in this life—being purged by appropriate punishment. This was, of course, an embryonic form of the later Purgatory.¹²

⁹ Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, book 7, chap. 16, in *ANF*, vol. 5, p. 109.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, in *ANF*, vol. 5, p. 109.

¹¹ Cf. Origen, *Against Celsus*, book 6, chap. 22, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 583.

¹² Hippolytus, *op. cit.*, book 7, chap. 15; book 10, chap. 10, in *ANF*, vol. 5, pp. 108, 144; also Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies*, book 4, chap. 12, in *ANF*, vol. 2, pp. 425, 426.

4. MARCION REJECTS HEART OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.—Marcion, of Rome, disposed of all historical foundations and established a purely imaginary system of Christianity, his special notion being that the gospel is wholly a gospel of love, to the exclusion of law. This led him to the rejection of the Old Testament. But that came from the pagan Gnosticism of ancient Egypt, which was starkly antinomian. The Demiurge, or Creator-God, revealed as the Old Testament Jehovah from Genesis 1 onward, Marcion held to be wholly a god of law, having nothing to do with the gospel of Christ.

Marcion held that it was the purpose of the Supreme God to overthrow the Demiurge. And, as the true contrast of law and spirit was understood by Paul alone, in New Testament times, only his ten epistles were accepted as canonical Scripture. Marriage and procreation were attributed to Satan, and Marcion also denied the human birth of the Saviour,¹³ regarding His body as a mere appearance, and His life and death as simply apparent—Docetism.

5. CARPOCRATES TAUGHT A LICENTIOUS ETHIC.—Carpocrates of Alexandria likewise taught the transmigration of immortal souls, passing from body to body, until at last liberated, then soaring to God, the Maker of the world, who is above the angels. Carpocrates was also antinomian, preached a licentious ethic, and taught that Jesus was born by natural generation.¹⁴

6. Gnostic HERESIES FORCE CHURCH TO DEFINE FAITH.—Because of this babel of conflicting voices, confusion was confounded as to what "Christians" really believed, for the Gnostic factions all masqueraded under that name. In the very nature of the case, true Christian teachers were compelled to defend the genuine Christian faith against the multiform attacks of this vicious assailant. Thus it was that the Gnostic controversy

¹³ Hippolytus, *op. cit.*, book 7, chaps. 17-19, in *ANF*, vol. 5, pp. 110, 112.

¹⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 1, chap. 25, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 350; see also Hippolytus, *op. cit.*, chap. 20, in *ANF*, vol. 5, pp. 113, 114.

forced the Christian Church to define her doctrinal beliefs and basic positions, and hastened the development of her early formulas of faith, or creeds, as well as defining the accepted canon of Old and New Testament Scriptures. When these were duly defined and recognized, the Gnostics were then shut out from Christian fellowship.

III. Recapitulation of Principal Errors of Gnosticism

Here is a summary of the multiple errors of Gnosticism in its variant forms:

1. *Dualism*—The coexisting opposition of two eternally contrary principles, with matter regarded as evil, and therefore not having been created directly by the Supreme Being. There was consequent repugnance toward anything material.

2. *Emanations*—Posited on a succession of Aeons through emanations from the Supreme Being, the more remote the more degraded. In place of a direct creation, emanation ultimately produced the world.

3. *Demiurge*—The most degraded of the emanation figures was the World-Framer, identified with the God of the Jews, and the Old Testament inspired by him.

4. *Hostility to Judaism*—Jehovah regarded as malign, and actively hostile to the true god. Regarded as diabolical by some, while others considered him merely ignorant and imperfect.

5. *Docetism*—The Messiah's body only an appearance, or only temporarily used. Thus His Saviourship was denied.

6. *Rejection of Old Testament and All but Pauline New Testament Epistles*—Peter and James considered servants of the Demiurge.

7. *Striving After System*—Seeking to bring all eclectic truth into harmony, but with emphasis on pomp and ceremony.

8. *Arbitrary Aristocracy*—Men scaled in proportion to knowledge of supposed "mysteries": (1) the masses *sarkical*, animal or fleshly; (2) some—*psychical* or capable of reasoning about earthly matters; and (3) the elite, or Gnostics—the *spiritual*, apprehending divine mysteries.

9. *Fatalistic*—Man's present condition not from his own choosing, but results from the method of his creation. And from this he can do nothing to free himself.

10. *Matter Inherently Evil*—Great contempt of the flesh as inherently evil. Some practiced extreme asceticism; others believed that the indulgence of the flesh was immaterial, giving free rein to indulgence; and still others even insisted that the flesh ought to be destroyed by the practice of vice.

11. *Included Idea of Redemption*—A divine interposition in world

affairs was, however, conceived, to deliver from the dominion of evil. In this it differed from other theosophical systems.

12. *Degraded Christ*—Through the separation of the Creator of the world from the Supreme God, and putting Christ in the same category as other beings of a lower nature, Gnosticism degraded the dignity and deity of Christ.

13. *Transmigration*—That souls migrate from body to body until complete purification has been achieved; thus at fundamental variance with the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

Such was the complex peril that confronted the church and impelled Irenaeus to detail its errors and confront its claims—with much emphasis on the true nature and destiny of man. But before we turn to Irenaeus we must briefly note the menace of Manichaeism.

IV. Menace of Manichaeism Imperils Post-Nicene Church

Another grave peril that arose to menace the Christian Church, likewise based on a fundamentally distorted concept of body and soul, here and hereafter, was the Manichaean Dualistic movement, reaching its height in the fourth and fifth centuries. This further statement is therefore necessary for additional background understanding. The Manichaean movement followed after Gnosticism had passed its peak. It was actually a development of Gnosticism, with the Christian element reduced to a minimum and dualistic Zoroastrianism, old Babylonian nature worship, and other Oriental elements raised to the maximum—and all elevated to a *gnōsis*.

I. ORIGIN, CHARACTERISTICS, AND AMAZING SPREAD.—The early phenomenal spread of true Christianity awakened the opposition of all pagan religions from the Indus to the Euphrates. But when Gnostic Christianity was introduced into Persia, Zoroastrianism was on the decline. MANES, or Mani (c. A.D. 216-276), was born in Persia. Perceiving points of agreement between Mithraism, Parsiism, Buddhism, and Gnostic Christianity, he conceived the idea of blending Oriental pagan Dualism, the chief teachings of Parsiism, or Magism as reformed

by Zoroaster, with these new Gnostic-Christian elements. Christianity must first be freed from alleged Jewish corruptions, for he believed the Jews were worshiping darkness instead of light. Then this syncretism would be clothed in Biblical phraseology, thus to produce the perfect universal religion.¹⁶ It was a grandiose scheme.

Manes began the public teaching of his views in the Persian court about A.D. 240, but Zoroastrianism soon forced him into exile. Reaching Western China, he went from there down into India, where he became better acquainted with Buddhism and decided to incorporate its best points in his expanding syncretism. The "Christian" element was by now reduced to a hollow shell, stripped of all reality and divested of all true intent, simply retaining certain Christian terms. It was a crude, unholy alliance, but Manes propagated it far and wide. And Manes, it should be stated, was finally put to death by being flayed alive.

Manichaeism was persecuted by the Roman emperors, first as a Persian sect and then as a Gnostic cult. Laws were issued against it, as by Diocletian in A.D. 296. But still it flourished. It was vehemently opposed by some in the church, such as Ambrose and Athanasius and Gregory I. Yet it definitely influenced certain leaders in the church.¹⁸ Manichaeism first gained a foothold in Persia and Mesopotamia, penetrated the Roman Empire about A.D. 280, and established itself in Egypt by the close of the third century.

In the fourth century it began to spread rapidly, and achieved popularity in Italy. However, the bulk of its adherents were in Northern Africa. It survived in Chinese Turkestan for centuries, and by A.D. 1000 was still in Southern

¹⁶ On Manichaeism see Ephraim of Syria, Titus of Bostra, Irenaeus, Augustine, Albiruni (or Biruni), and collections of Manichaean manuscripts. Also such standard historians as Schaff, Hase, Gieseler, Neander, Waddington, Baur, Harnack, and Newman, together with Cudworth and Bunsen, and especially F. C. Burkitt, A. V. W. Jackson, and Hans J. Polotsky.

¹⁸ Augustine was a Manichee for nine years before he recognized its errors. Following that he spared no pains in trying to counteract Manichaeism. Nevertheless, some of the Manichaean modes of thought affected him, and he retained the evil principle of Dualism. His dogmatics reveal the marks left upon him. (See Hudson, *Debt and Grace*, pp. 144, 330; Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, vol. 1, pp. 197, 365.)

France and Spain, and even in Germany, affecting some of the monks and clergy. In fact, traces of it continued in various lands until the thirteenth century. Some even maintain that it continued to make proselytes up until the Reformation. And various medieval sects were believed to be Neo-Manichaeans at heart. For a time it appeared to be a real rival of Christianity.

2. ESSENCE OF THE MANICHAEAN MOVEMENT.—Manichaeism had a hierarchical organization. At the head stood Manes, regarded as an apostle of Christ and considering himself the Paraclete, completing the work left unfinished by Christ, with successors like Peter and the popes. The seat of the Manichaeen popes was for centuries at Babylon, then at Samarkand. Manes surrounded himself with twelve apostles and seventy bishops. There were five gradations in the cult: (1) Teachers—Manes and his successors, (2) bishops, or overseers, (3) elders or presbyters, (4) *electi*, or perfect, a priestly sacerdotal class, practicing Buddhist asceticism, and (5) *auditores*, or hearers—secular laymen with more freedom. It had a rigorous system of fasts with Sunday as the chief day, consecrated to the sun, the visible representation of light worship.

The prime object of it all was to free the "light" from the intermingled "darkness." Christ was sent to accomplish this. But according to the Manichaeans, His apostles misrepresented His doctrine, so Manes was sent to succeed where Christ had failed, and to restore what was lost. The soul partakes of the kingdom of light; the body of the kingdom of darkness. And Manichaeism's great moral aim was to teach men how to deliver the good soul from the corrupt body, and to overcome the power of evil matter, for evil was considered a real essence.

Manichaeism called for physical refinement rather than moral regeneration. And redemption was to be found in and through light, as worshiped in the East as a symbol of deity. But the World-Soul was still chained to matter. And instead of freeing the soul from darkness, light had turned into

darkness. Such were some of the grave issues raised by Manichaeism.

3. CHRISTIAN ASPECT EMASCULATED AND NULLIFIED.—The "Christian" aspect of Manichaeism was reduced to a farce. It held that Christ did not really die, that He did not have a real body, and no dual (divine-human) nature—only a fantastic semblance of corporeality in which His essence as the Son of Everlasting Light was presented to the eyes of men. That, of course, was simply Docetism.²⁷ Accordingly, they held that Christ had no human birth, and that His suffering and death were really fictitious. Thus the life of Christ was, to the Manichaeans, only a series of illusory appearances. All historical reality was removed, leaving only a few Christian terms and metaphores. And some identified Christ with Mithras. Thus the system was stripped of a saving Christ. That was its most sinister aspect.

4. FANTASTIC CONCEPTS OF BODY, SOUL, REDEMPTION, RESURRECTION.—The intrinsic evil of matter and the human body was taken as axiomatic. Man, they taught, consists of two opposing principles, with a soul like the kingdom of light, and a body like the kingdom of darkness. Struggling souls on earth are to be delivered from their sinful bodies, and after being purified by the sun are to ascend to the region of light. But those souls that neglect the struggle against their corrupt nature are, after death, to pass, through transmigration, into the bodies of animals or other beings until they have expiated their guilt.

And this belief in the intrinsic evil of matter led them, perforce, to *the denial of the resurrection*. Matter was somehow always evil, the flesh being ever and necessarily at war with the spirit. Salvation therefore lay in the exterminating of bodily

²⁷ Docetism—denying the humanity and sufferings of Christ as apparent rather than real—denied the unique union of the divine and the human in Christ's person, and rejected the reality of the incarnation. Many held that *Jesus* was a mere man, and that the *Aeon* Christ descended upon the man Jesus at His baptism, but left Him immediately before His crucifixion—so that Christ was not actually subject to pain and death. Docetism is in contrast with Ebionism.

desires. Thus a rigid and gloomy abstinence was fostered.

5. BASED ON AN ABSOLUTE DUALISM.—Manichaeism is based on an absolute, pagan Dualism¹⁸—two eternal principles from which all things proceed; two everlasting kingdoms bordering on each other—the kingdom of light under the dominion of God, and the kingdom of darkness under the control of Daemon, eternally opposed to each other. In the visible world they are commingled and in conflict. But the question of *the eternity of evil was really the main issue*—its essence and its outcome.

But within its framework of the absolute Dualism, explained in mystic terms, was a sort of pantheism, each element of the Dualism evolving into multiformity. From the “kingdom of light” emanated the “mother of life,” which in turn generated the “primitive man,” who was overcome by the kingdom of darkness. Thus created, man consists of two opposite principles, with a soul that must be freed from the body of darkness, the higher nature being tempted by the lower.

6. CHURCH RITES, POLITY, AND CEREMONIES.—In Manichaeism's religious rites, baptism and communion were celebrated with great pomp and ceremony, as by Catholics a little later. The *elect* were a sacerdotal group, the connecting link between the *auditors* and the “kingdom of light.” They practiced Buddhist asceticism, possessed no property, were celibate, abstained from wine, took no animal life, and subjected human life to stringent regulations.

Another sinister aspect was that they rejected the Old Testament as the work of the god of darkness, and they accepted the New Testament only conditionally, where not in conflict with their teachings. Nevertheless, absurd and un-Christian as it was, it claimed to be the “only true Christianity.” It exalted asceticism, introduced pompous ceremonialism,

¹⁸ Polytheistic Persia personalized its Dualism under Ormuzd and Ahriman, without beginning or ending. Their gross and bald Dualism asserted two personal, self-subsisting gods, warring eternally against each other. Evil was an eternal necessity, and involved eternal sin and misery, and is unconquerable or irreducible. That was the basis and the animus of Manichaeism.

held that its ministers are the intermediaries between God and man, possessing extraordinary powers with God, and introduced a sort of Purgatory. Prayers were addressed to the God of Light, the kingdom of light, the angels, and to Manes—the self-styled Paraclete or Comforter, who was to declare the way of salvation.

This was another of the vicious systems confronting the church, against which loyal churchmen were impelled to fight in post-Nicene times. That is why the Conditionalists dwelt so constantly upon the true origin, nature, and destiny of man, and the true provisions of salvation and immortality in Christ, together with the revealed fate of the wicked.

That is why we have been compelled to turn aside long enough for a candid examination—in order to understand the sinister character of these movements and the spread of their activities that induced such widespread discussion of the nature and destiny of man. Nevertheless, these were some of the multiple factors in the growing acceptance of the Innate-Immortality thesis, and the dualistic notion of the eternity of evil, which is tied in with the concept of the Eternal Torment of the wicked.

Irenaeus of Gaul—Conditionalist Champion on Western Outpost

**First of Three Schools of Theological Trilemma Strengthened—
Irenaeus Helps Establish Clear Positions of Conditionalism**

I. Unique Position as Contender for Orthodoxy

We now turn to Irenaeus, of Gaul, most conspicuous and learned Conditionalist of the third century, who bore a remarkable testimony in this transition hour. The close of the second century reveals a marked change in the character and position of the expanding Christian Church. It had appealed to the judgment of various philosophers, but had not yet won the deference of the statesmen. Nevertheless, the church was in definite process of establishment throughout the empire.

Meanwhile, within the church acrimonious controversy had developed over the issue of Chiliasm, or the reign of the glorified saints on earth during the thousand years following the Second Advent. This was occasioned by extremists who had brought the whole premillennialist position into discredit. And now heresies were sweeping over the church like destructive swarms of locusts, to devour the "harvest" of the gospel. Gnosticism was the most devastating of all, and so became the object of Irenaeus' massive attack.

I. PUPIL OF CONDITIONALIST POLYCARP, OF SMYRNA.—
With this as a setting we now turn to the Western outpost of the church in Celtic Gaul, which in A.D. 177 was visited by terrible persecution under Aurelius, with many martyrdoms at Lyons. Although nothing is known positively as to the origin

Irenaeus of Gaul — Conditional Champion of Western Outpost; Mortal Man Must Be Immortalized.



of the church in Gaul, its pioneers are believed to have come from Asia Minor. But about A.D. 178 IRENAEUS (*c.* 130-202), who had been born in Asia Minor, was made bishop of Gaul. He had received a Hellenistic education, but definitely belonged to the West, and became one of the most learned and renowned of the early Ante-Nicene Fathers.

He had been a pupil of Polycarp of Smyrna, who, it will be remembered, was an avowed Conditionalist. This association doubtless influenced Irenaeus' own views on this controverted question. And now from Lyons, on the banks of the Rhone, he conducted a vast missionary and literary activity. By this time Gnosticism was rampant, and Irenaeus sought both to check its sweep and to reaffirm and establish the fundamentals of the Christian faith. In this he became the most renowned champion of orthodoxy in his generation. He was also the connecting link between East and West. Because of his unique testimony as a spokesman for Conditionalism we shall analyze his witness quite fully.

2. **LIFELONG FOE OF CONTEMPORARY HERESIES.**—Irenaeus was a lifelong foe of these contemporary heresies, especially Gnosticism, then spreading like a pestilence over portions of the church in various lands. He studied them as a skilled physician studies diseases, says Coxe, classifying, describing, and countering them. He was an independent thinker, and fearless in the expression of his convictions. Thus he set an example of resistance to Rome when she was to be blamed, that persisted through the centuries.¹

As to Gnosticism, with its professed "knowledge" (*gnōsis*)—but actually sinister assumptions and absurdities—Irenaeus felt his task to be clear. He must make it impossible for anyone to confound true Christianity with Gnosticism. Moreover, he must make it impossible for such a monstrous system to survive, or ever to rise again. In this high resolve he delivered body blows, demonstrating its essential identity with old pagan mythology and heathen systems of philosophy, and refuting its sophistries. So, despite militant paganism and heresy he set up the landmarks of the faith in Gaul, as he castigated the errors of his day.

3. **GENERAL SURVEY OF IRENAEUS' DEFINITIVE TREATISE.**—Bishop Irenaeus' famous treatise *Against Heresies* is a detailed exposure and confutation of the multiform Gnostic heresies of the time, leading into a definitive exposition and defense of the Christian faith. Its full title, as given by Eusebius, is *A Refutation and Subversion of Knowledge falsely so called*. Written during the episcopate of Plotinus, his predecessor at Lyons, it is divided into five books. The first two are a detailed description of the sinister teachings of the heretical sects, with an exposure and overthrow of their absurdities. The remaining three books set forth the true Christian doctrine as the rule of faith and practice, but still in basic contrast with, and opposition to, Gnosticism.

The Gnostics had raised two questions: How could the

¹ Coxe, "Introductory Note to Irenaeus Against Heresies," in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 309, 310.

finite be reconciled with the Infinite? and, How could the existence of evil be accounted for? Here was Irenaeus' able answer. Regrettably, only the first book has been preserved in the Greek original. The rest are in Latin translation only—made when the church had all but universally adopted the Augustinian theory, and by a translator of that persuasion. Too much dependence cannot, therefore, be placed on the precise rendering of certain controverted passages. Nevertheless, the treatise bears remarkable testimony to the Conditionalist doctrine of the nature and destiny of man, and its inseparable corollary, the ultimate destruction of the wicked.

4. STANDS AS BULWARK AGAINST UNIVERSAL INNATE IMMORTALITY.—It should be remembered that Irenaeus was recognized as one of the ablest and soundest of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. He stands in imposing contrast with, and opposition to, the two conflicting schools just arising. These in time came to be known as Augustinianism (with its universal Innate-Immortality thesis, combined with the Eternal-Torment-of-the-wicked postulate developed by Tertullian), and Origenism (likewise with its universal Innate Immortality, but having as its corollary the ultimate universal restoration of the wicked). Irenaeus stood as a bulwark against both of these conflicting immortal-soul concepts just making their appearance. His chronological timing and relationship to the other Church Fathers will be seen by the Tabular Chart F, on page 758.

Let us first take a panoramic view of his over-all positions. On the basis of Holy Writ, Irenaeus envisioned the coming of a clean universe—free from sin and suffering, brought about through the ultimate destruction of sin, sinners, and demons—and the final restoration of righteousness. In refuting the pagan postulate of the Innate Immortality of the soul, Irenaeus stressed that it is from God's own grace, majesty, and power, and not from our own nature, that we receive the gift of immortality, or living forever.

5. WICKED DESTINED TO CESSATION OF BEING.—Irenaeus seemed to exhaust the expressive vocabulary at his command

in denying the immortality of the unsaved. The incorrigibly wicked are consigned to eternal punishment which, he explains, ends in complete cessation of being or existence; and this results in the end of all evil. The chastisement of the wicked will be eternal in its *effects*, because God's benefits are eternal. His argument, in a sentence, was this: *To be deprived of the benefits of existence is the greatest punishment, and to be deprived of them forever is to suffer "eternal punishment."* This should be borne in mind.

Irenaeus rejected the principle, common alike to Gnosticism and to Platonism, that glorifies the soul and depreciates the body. He held to the oneness of man and insisted on the resurrection of the body and the redemption of the entire man. He argued against the transmigration of souls, a belief held in the East and in Greece and even creeping into the church in Alexandria. To Irenaeus "incorruptibility" does not mean a mere mystic purity of life but the imperishability of the resurrected body and the whole man.

Church historian Philip Schaff declared Irenaeus to be the leading representative of the Johannine School in the second half of the second century, the champion of orthodoxy against the Gnostic heresy, and mediator between the Eastern and the Western church, and, on the whole, the "most orthodox of the ante-Nicene fathers."² In the light of Irenaeus' pronounced Conditionalism, that is a highly significant evaluation.

6. ESCHATOLOGICAL OUTLINE PORTRAYS LAST EVENTS.—Before we take up Irenaeus' discussion of man's nature and destiny, it is desirable to grasp his exposition of the great prophetic outlines of Scripture, as these have a direct bearing on his eschatological views. Irenaeus was an able expositor of the major prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse. The impressive parallelism of Daniel 2 and 7 is brought out with remarkable clarity—the four world powers of Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, and their aftermath.

² Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 751.

He identifies his own times with that of the Roman "fourth," "*which now rules,*" but which, he held, was soon to be partitioned, according to prophecy, into ten lesser kingdoms—the coming nations of Western Europe. And this breakup of Rome, portrayed by the broken feet-and-toes portion of the image of Daniel 2, sets forth the same fourth kingdom, partitioned into the same ten smaller kingdoms, but here followed by the Heaven-descending stone kingdom of Christ, destined to smite the nations in earth's latter days.

Then, Irenaeus notes in Daniel 7 an added feature, pertaining to coming developments in the Roman Empire. A "little horn" kingdom was to supplant three of Rome's ten divisions, which he identified under the multiple names of Antichrist, Man of Sin, Mystery of Iniquity, Son of Perdition, Beast, and Little Horn, whose reign would terminate in destruction at the Second Advent.⁴ And Christ's second coming is, he states, accompanied by the first resurrection, and followed by the reign of the resurrected saints during the millennium.⁵

But the general resurrection and judgment upon the wicked, Irenaeus declares, *follows* the descent of the New Jerusalem at the *end* of the millennial period. Such is his bold and clear depiction of the inspired or prophesied outline of the centuries, and the order of eschatological events—including the final destiny and disposition of all mankind.

By having before us Irenaeus' concept of the final disposition of all things—in other words, his eschatology—the way is open for understanding his view of the annihilation of the wicked in connection with the last judgment, and the conferring of immortality on the righteous only, and not on the wicked. Thus inspired prophecy and Biblical doctrine are, according to Irenaeus, seen to be in complete agreement. But there is one key principle that unlocks his entire exposition.

7. CHRIST CAME TO UNDO RUIN WROUGHT BY ADAM.—

³ Irenaeus, *op. cit.*, book 5, chaps. 25, 26, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 553-555.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chaps. 25-35, pp. 553-566.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, sec. 2, p. 566. For details of his exposition consult Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 1, pp. 244-252.

Irenaeus' position may be summed up in the word "recapitulation," meaning "summing up" or "starting afresh." Jesus is the Second Adam. As Adam fell through *disobedience* and became mortal, so Jesus came as the Second Adam to be victorious through *obedience*, and to confer immortality. From this position Irenaeus attacks the Gnostics. They say that the flesh is the work of the Demiurge, and so is of no account, and that man, in his soul, is naturally immortal. Irenaeus says that the flesh is the handiwork of the true God and a vital part of man and so must be redeemed. For these reasons Christ came in true flesh to undo what Adam had done in the flesh. This is the key to Irenaeus' entire treatise.

II. Irenaeus' Basic Doctrinal Positions and Definitions

Before taking up the comprehensive witness provided through a consecutive book-by-book coverage of *Against Heresies*, let us preview Irenaeus' basic positions and his fundamental definitions and usages of terms for guidance through his voluminous treatise. First to be noted are certain contrasts. Eighty years ago Anglican Prebendary Henry Constable so ably tabulated Irenaeus' leading positions that his general outline will, in part, be followed here.

1. MORTAL MAN MUST BE IMMORTALIZED AT RESURRECTION.—Irenaeus' views were diametrically opposed to those of the Tertullian-Augustinian School—with their Innate-Immortality and Eternal-Torment-of-the-wicked postulate—just then appearing in Rome and Africa. Tertullian and Augustine maintained that from the very beginning man was possessed of an inherent and inalienable immortality of the soul. Irenaeus, on the contrary, held that man's entire nature was created *for* immortality, but was mortal,⁹ and not yet possessed of immortality.

⁹ Irenaeus, *op. cit.*, book 4, chap. 39, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 522, 523.

He maintained that *unfallen* man, in his first estate in Eden, had to obtain something that he did not at first possess, and failed to obtain. And in his *fallen* state, if he refused to accept Christ as his complete Saviour from sin, man cut himself off from the proffered gift of immortality. Thus Irenaeus' position was absolutely irreconcilable with the Augustinian dogma that the wicked have an innately immortal existence. He, on the contrary, held that immortality will be *bestowed* at the resurrection, with the reunion of the believer's body and soul.⁷

2. TO LIVE IS TO "EXIST"; TO DIE, TO "CEASE TO EXIST."—Irenaeus' concept of "life" is that of the literal sense of *existence*, whereas Augustinianism forced upon the word the thought of "well-being," "happiness," "felicity." But to Irenaeus there may be *life* where there is no light or joy, but only fear, darkness, and sorrow, for the flesh partakes of life. And Irenaeus defines *life eternal* as never growing old, never dying the second death, never ceasing to exist. It is Christ, the Prince of Life, who existed before all, who is the source of all life. To live, then, is to exist.⁸

3. ETERNAL LIFE IS "BESTOWED" ETERNAL EXISTENCE.—Eternal life, he held, is that life that is *bestowed* by Christ upon His redeemed. And it involves "perpetual duration," "continuance for ever and ever," "length of days for ever and ever," or unending existence, and is set forth as identical with "immortality" and "incorruptibility." Believers are the "children of the resurrection," through which they will obtain the life now pledged to them. Immortality is now in promise, but not as yet in actual possession. Thus the elect are "enrolled" for "life eternal." That, said Irenaeus, is the Christian's glorious prospect.

4. IMMORTALITY RESTRICTED TO THE RIGHTEOUS.—None

⁷ *Ibid.*, book 5, chaps. 10-13, pp. 536-541.

⁸ GENERAL NOTE: As stated, the multiple references to Irenaeus' many statements cited in this chapter, and scattered throughout his five books, are not duplicated here because of space, but appear in the chapter-by-chapter coverage in chapter 52.

but the redeemed will obtain this life that will never end, this "perpetual duration." It is a *gift* from God through Christ, and is confined to the redeemed. The unbelieving and wicked "shall not inherit the world of life which is to come." They thereby "defraud themselves of this life," having forfeited it through their perverseness. And their "everlasting perdition" consists in "cutting them off from this [proffered] life." In this specific way Irenaeus' stand is in complete contrast with that of the later Augustinian School, which taught that unending existence is for all men, evil as well as good.

5. DISOBEDIENCE CAUSED LOSS OF MAN'S IMMORTALITY.—Coming specifically to "immortality" (*athanasia*), Irenaeus gives its primary meaning as exemption from death and annihilation; in other words, unending existence. When applied to God it is the absolute, eternal existence of which He cannot be deprived. But Irenaeus repeatedly asserts that immortality was forfeited by man through his transgression, and cannot possibly be the inherent possession of the disobedient. Because of disobedience man was "cast off from immortality." And he asks the unanswerable question "How can man be immortal who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker?"

Moreover, the immortality thus lost by sin can be regained only by choice and struggle. Irenaeus cites Paul's logical and consistent exhortation to struggle that we may be crowned with immortality, and refers to "that which is acquired by our struggle, but which does not encircle us of its own accord."

6. UNION WITH CHRIST RESULTS IN IMMORTALITY.—In various ways and by multiple forms of expression, Irenaeus insists that immortality is a gift conveyed to the believer through the gospel, which provision he interestingly describes as "breathing out immortality" and "vivifying man afresh." Union with Christ is the sole means by which it is gained. So he says, "By no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality." This involves a saving knowledge of the

Son of God, and friendship with God, which "imparts immortality to those who embrace it." This honor is both accorded and restricted to "those who have obeyed and believed on God."

7. FUTURE DESTINIES DETERMINED BY CONTRASTING RESURRECTIONS.—Irenaeus' view on the resurrection, or rather, the resurrections—of the just and the unjust—confirms his point. Augustinianism held that the bodies of the wicked will be raised immortal, for eternal suffering. Irenaeus, on the contrary, restricts immortality to the redeemed, to be bestowed at the *first* resurrection, and only to the bodies of the "just" when God will "render" them "incorruptible and immortal." Contrariwise, the bodies of the wicked will be mortal in their resurrection, and subject to disintegration and final destruction.

8. INCORRUPTION MEANS "INCAPABLE OF DECAY."—By "incorruption" Irenaeus stated that he means exemption from decay or dissolution, or exemption from ceasing to exist. It must be remembered that Irenaeus was opposing Gnostic heretics who denied a bodily resurrection, and who held that the flesh of the "spiritual" is "not capable of corruption," that they must continue on forever. But Irenaeus asserted its applicability to matter. Thus the flesh not only decays but is capable of being quickened. When infused with life from God it enjoys eternity of transformed existence, and is then precluded from "becoming old." But this belongs to the redeemed alone, and is attained only by union with Christ, and secured in and through Christ. It is denied to the wicked.

9. INCORRUPTION NOW "IN PROMISE," NOT YET IN POSSESSION.—Irenaeus held that this incorruption of the righteous is not possessed in this present life, where it is had only *in promise*, but at the resurrection, when the saints shall have it *in possession*. And the present indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the earnest, or pledge, of incorruption. Thus the resurrection is "the commencement of incorruption," contrary to the figurative explanations of what came to be called Augustinianism.

10. RESURRECTION BODIES ARE TOTALLY DISTINCT.—

Irenaeus puts a marked distinction between the bodies of the just and the unjust at the resurrection. In contrast with Augustinianism's eternal duration of the wicked as essential to its Eternal-Torment-of-the-wicked thesis, Irenaeus' eternal duration is expressly confined to the "incorruptible" and "immortal" redeemed. Thus the hope of the resurrection, which is "to eternity," is for the righteous, while the wicked remain in mortal flesh, subject to the second death.

11. TO "PERISH" MEANS ULTIMATE NONEXISTENCE.—

To "perish" is another of Irenaeus' strong and frequently used words. It is synonymous with *ultimate nonexistence*. This is in contrast with the Gnostic position, which denied that the wicked perish, but rather are "absorbed in the universal substance." But to Irenaeus to "perish" is the ultimate fate of all unrighteous souls. It leads to cessation of existence. On the other hand, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Augustine contended that the wicked do not die in Hell, that cessation of being never comes, and never can come to them, that they are both in soul and in body incorruptible, eternal, immortal. Irenaeus held to diametrically opposite terms and concepts.

12. PUNISHMENT IS "PUNITIVE," NOT "PURGATIVE."—

To the later Origenists, Restorationism's future punishment is "*purgative*." And after a protracted period the soul sentenced to Hell will allegedly come forth purified, and join the ranks of the redeemed. But to Irenaeus, to whom the verdict of the judgment is eternal, the punishment is "*punitive*," and is eternal in its effects. The hideous cruelty of Augustinianism's Eternal Torment finds no sanction in Irenaeus. To him the duration of the punishment is eternal, but its nature is death, destruction, perdition, cessation of being, annihilation—not ceaseless punishing. Augustinianism teaches that the wicked will remain forever alive and unconsumed, but Irenaeus contends that they "shall be burned up as were Nadab and Abihu," by fire from the Lord. They will "perish," be "punished with

everlasting death," will "pass away," will "not endure forever." And "everlasting perdition" he defines as "cutting off the wicked from life," and being "deprived of continuance for ever and ever." It signifies "non-existence," and the "loss of all benefits."

13. ETERNAL PUNISHMENT IS ETERNAL LOSS OF LIFE.—Future punishment is, to Irenaeus, "eternal" because the loss of blessing is eternal, not because of eternally inflicting new misery, but because of eternal *loss* of what the saints eternally enjoy. Separation from God involves the death penalty, the forfeiting of life, the loss of life. Eternal loss is eternal punishment. "*Eternal death*" cuts them off from eternal life.

14. LIFE DEPENDENT ON GRATUITY OF GOD.—In answering the Gnostic contention that there could be no immortality or endless existence for any created souls that had a beginning, Irenaeus responds that they will endure as long as God wills the existence and continuance of the saved. It is the Father "who imparts continuance for ever and ever on those who are saved." He says, "Life does not arise from us, nor from our own nature." Such as accept the gift of this provision "shall receive length of days for ever and ever." And contrariwise, he who rejects the offer of this gift "deprives himself of continuance for ever and ever."

We close this preview of Irenaeus' Conditionalist positions by quoting the impressive conclusion to the learned Prebendary Constable's denial of the claims of those Immortal-Soulists who cite Irenaeus as sustaining the contention that the wicked will exist in misery forever and ever, and that their punishment will be "deprivation of happiness," not ultimate annihilation:

"To say that 'sweet' means 'bitter,' or that 'light' means 'darkness,' is just as allowable a use of words as to say that the 'enduring' and 'continuing' of one of God's works, such as the sun in the sky or the human soul, means 'the happiness' of these works. We dismiss such interpretation as an insult to our common understanding. Irenaeus, notwithstanding his Benedictine editor and his Presbyterian translator, tells us that the wicked will not continue to exist for ever, because God does not will them to exist. God

did will his [man's] 'happiness' and his 'well-being,' but he marred them. God does not will his continued existence, and therefore he will cease to exist. Such is the testimony of the learned, holy, and martyred Bishop of Lyons, in the second century of Christ." °

° Constable, *Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, p. 191.

Irenaeus Voices Preponderant Belief of Church

I. Foremost Second-Century Contender for Conditionalism

As has already been observed, Irenaeus was one of the noble minds of his generation, as well as one of the most learned and respected theological authorities of his time. Enslin says of him, "Irenaeus is properly regarded one of the most influential figures of the ante-Nicene Church."¹ Among contemporary bishops he was surpassed by none in influence and importance throughout his long episcopate. He was the foremost second-century contender for Conditionalism. Because of its explicitness and candor, his testimony is therefore of exceptional value in our quest. As to timing, his principal treatise was written, it is believed, between A.D. 182 and 188.² A systematic survey of his total testimony is therefore highly desirable, in addition to the panoramic view given in the previous chapter on his Conditionalist stand. Two perplexing passages will also be frankly examined. These will appear in Appendix B.

As noted, Irenaeus' most conspicuous work for the church was his masterful refutation of the spreading Gnostic perversions, which included gross misconceptions and false teachings regarding the nature and destiny of man. But he was similarly successful in refuting the Platonic postulate of the

¹ Morgan S. Enslin, "Irenaeus," in Ferm. *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 379.

² Coxe, "Introductory Note to Irenaeus Against Heresies," in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 312.

natural immortality of the soul, now just beginning to make entrance into the Christian Church.

In his exposure of the subversions of Gnosticism, Irenæus was compelled to deal decisively with their wearisome specious contentions over "emanations," "Aeons," the "*Plēroma*," the "*Archōn*," et cetera, which have already been defined on page 862. But Irenæus is not content with merely refuting error. He affirms truth, going into the heart of the issues involved, and dealing with the fundamentals at stake. And he does so as a conspicuous proponent of many of the principles of Conditionalism. That is the key to his arguments. Only by the total testimony of this fearless and faithful key witness, and a summation of his multiple statements, can the full impact and significance of his position be seen.

1. GRAPPLES WITH BASIC ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY.—In his positive approach Irenæus not only exposes Gnosticism's origin and degrading character but also insists on the true and rightful place of Christ in the Godhead, as Creator and Redeemer of man. In contradistinction to Gnosticism, Irenæus stressed the goodness of God's original material creation, the true nature of man as created, the disastrous character and entry of sin, and the catastrophic results of the Edenic fall.

He pressed on the reality of the earthly life of Jesus Christ—emphasizing His eternal pre-existence, His incarnation through a virgin birth (thus He became the one and only God-man in order to save men), His sinless life on earth, His actual sufferings and crucifixion, His vicarious atoning death, His literal resurrection and ascension, and heavenly ministry. Irenæus insisted on salvation and immortalization solely in and through Christ, with immortality as a gift "conferred" on the righteous at the first resurrection.

2. REMARKABLE SCOPE OF ANALYSIS OF ERROR.—Irenæus likewise denied the Gnostic notion of the eternal existence of sin, involving sinful, polluted beings in the universe of God, continuing on defiantly throughout all eternity. Irenæus in-

sisted that, on the contrary, Christ came to banish sin and to restore universal harmony and righteousness by bringing all sin and pollution to an utter and permanent end. This point he stressed effectively.

Only God, Irenaeus firmly held, is by His own nature inherently and absolutely immortal. But, by the will of God, men will continue to exist only as long as He shall please and determine. The object of the Incarnation was expressly stated to be the purging away of all sin and the ultimate annihilation of all evil. At the same time Irenaeus deftly undermined the notion of such an accomplishment by universal restoration of all sinners, as some were then beginning to argue. His unequivocal utterances are on open record. So to these we now turn.

II. Devastating Exposure of Gnostic Errors and Countering Truth

Book one of *Against Heresies* contains an analytical description of the tenets of the various Gnostic sects, exposing their crass absurdities and antisciptural character, and at the same time reaffirming the truths with which they were in direct conflict. Book two constitutes a complete demolition of their vicious teachings, principally on the grounds of reason. Here the foe, masquerading as "Christian," is effectively unmasked. Then, books three and five present the true doctrines of revelation as the complete antithesis of the speculations of Gnosticism. Note the specifics:

Chapter one (of book one) deals with Valentinus and his "fancied" and "ever-existing" Aeons contention—that of alleged emanations, or "fructifications," from the divine substance, subsisting coordinately with the Deity, but dwelling outside the *Plēroma* (divine fullness). The Valentinians claimed that these various Aeons, which are listed,³ "possess

³ Irenaeus, *op. cit.*, book 1, chap. 1, secs. 1, 2, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 316, 317.

perpetual existence" and are coeternal with the divine nature.⁴ A description of Gnosticism's grotesque origin of the visible world fills chapters four and five, and their concept of the Demiurge, himself created, but the "Framer" of all other things yet outside the *Plēroma*.⁵

This caution may well be given. In this systematic and searching analysis of Irenaeus, one must beware of taking certain of his descriptions of the fallacies of Gnostic notions to be the expression of his own positions, as some have unjustifiably done. In chapters six and seven the three categories of men—spiritual, material, and animal, that are "feigned by these heretics"—are rehearsed. That their alleged "animal men" and "animal souls" are noted, together with the sacrilegious Gnostic references to the "animal Christ"—though not in the "material" category, as is differentiated in note 2.⁶

Chapter seven concerns their "blasphemous opinions against the true incarnation of Christ by the Virgin Mary."⁷ The material and animal souls are, they say, destined to "corruption"—if they do not make the right choice—and pass to "destruction." And chapter eight notes their twisting perversions of Scripture, to "support their own impious opinions,"⁸ with refutations following.

III. Irenaeus' Personal Creed Then Preponderant Belief of Church

1. IRENAEUS' "CREED," AND "CONFERRED" IMMORTALITY.—In chapter ten Irenaeus sets forth his personal statement of faith, couched in "sublime simplicity,"⁹ which belief he declares to be "the Faith of the Church Throughout the Whole World." Because of its representative character, as the generally accepted faith of Christians at that time (between A.D. 182 and 188), it is here given in entirety, as essential reading:

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, sec. 5, p. 318.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, sec. 2, p. 322.

⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 324.

⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 325.

⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 326.

⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 330, note 5.

"[She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father 'to gather all things in one,' and to *raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race*, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, 'every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess' to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send 'spiritual wickedness,' and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, *confer immortality on the righteous, and holy*, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory."¹⁰

This refreshing and illuminating statement of the cardinal truths of Christianity was the direct antithesis and antidote to the Gnostic distortions. Here the Trinity is set forth, with Christ as truly God, becoming "incarnate for our salvation." The Holy Spirit is presented as the inspirer of the prophets. Then follows the truth of the two advents, the virgin birth, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension, in flesh, of our Lord.

And finally Christ's second advent from Heaven in glory is depicted, to "raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race," through the resurrection, as the omnipotent Christ returns to "execute just judgment" on all men. The Advent is climaxed with the sending of the "ungodly" "into everlasting fire," along with the fallen angels, while at the same time Christ confers "immortality on the righteous, and holy" who repented. Thenceforth they are surrounded with "everlasting glory."¹¹ This is the manner in which Irenaeus believed all evil and pollution would be removed from the universe,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 1, pp. 330, 331. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

and harmony and righteousness restored. It is in striking harmony with the apostolic teaching. It is definitely Conditionalist.

2. IRENÆUS' STATEMENT NEVER AGAIN TRUE.—The significance of this comprehensive creedal statement must not be missed. While this is Irenæus' personal confession of faith, it is, he avers, more than that. It is the preponderant belief of the church at large at that time—*uttered, be it noted, just before the church had come to the fork in the stream, when the eddying currents of Immortal-Soulism, under Athenagoras and Tertullian (and soon thereafter Origen), began swirling away from the main channel of the original stream, in new and divergent courses.*

Its time of utterance is therefore of great significance. Never again could it be said that this was the generally accepted view. Thenceforth there was a tangent view, with the Immortal-Soul concept steadily gaining in acceptance. It was consequently the last time that such a general declaration of Conditionalist belief could be made in the Early Church. Irenæus firmly held that immortality is *conferred*, not inherent, and is proffered to all men, but bestowed on the righteous only. It is definitely not for the wicked, and not merely for an elite Gnostic clique.

3. GNOSTICISM IS BUT CAMOUFLAGED PAGANISM.—Irenæus then turns to the plaguing heresies. Chapter after chapter follows, with telling strokes against the "deviations" of Saturninus and Basilides (chapter twenty-four), and Carpocrates (chapter twenty-five), with all their "deceitful arts and nefarious practices," and "absurdities" *ad nauseum*. Special note is taken of the Marcosians (chapter twenty) and their total misconception of redemption (chapter twenty-one). Similar perversions, found in Cerinthus, the Ebionites, and the Nicolaitanes (chapter twenty-six) are noted, as well as those of Cerdo, Marcion, Tatian, the Encratites (chapters twenty-seven and twenty-eight), and others (chapters twenty-nine to thirty-one). Such was the sad state of affairs among these fringe groups when Irenæus battled for truth and grappled with error.

Continuing his searching charges in the first thirteen chapters of book two, he comes (in chapter fourteen) to the fundamental point that Gnosticism is derived from paganism, simply with changed terminology—such as that “the Creator formed the world out of previously existing material,” and that God “cannot impart immortality to what is mortal, or bestow incorruption on what is corruptible.”¹² Their systems, he asserts, are “burdened with so great contradictions.”¹³ Irenaeus exposes the “folly of the arguments derived . . . from numbers, letters, and syllables.”¹⁴

4. MADE INCORRUPTIBLE AND IMMORTAL AT RESURRECTION.—Irenaeus refutes the false Gnostic view on the nature and destiny of man, again declaring that immortality and incorruptibility come at the resurrection. He insisted on the oneness of man and the redemption of the whole man:

“And then the doctrine concerning the resurrection of bodies which we believe, will emerge true and certain [from their system]; since, [as we hold,] God, *when He resuscitates our mortal bodies* which preserved righteousness, will render them incorruptible and immortal.”¹⁵

The *time* of that immortalization is clear. It is at the Second Advent and resurrection.

5. ETERNAL CONTINUANCE IS “BESTOWED” AND “IMPARTED.”—In chapter thirty-three Irenaeus exposes the fiction and “Absurdity of the Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls.” He says they “never existed in other bodies.”¹⁶ Irenaeus tells of the resurrection of the entire man—how “all those who have been *enrolled* for life [eternal] shall rise again, having their own bodies, and having also their own souls, and their own spirits, in which they had pleased God.”¹⁷ Irenaeus’ climax comes in chapter thirty-four, where he explicitly declares that “God alone, who is Lord of all, is without beginning and with-

¹² *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 14, sec. 4, p. 377.

¹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 17, sec. 1, p. 380.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, heading, p. 393.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 29, sec. 2, p. 403. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 33, sec. 5, p. 410.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 411. (Italics supplied.)

out end," and therefore "unchangeable." From Him all things proceed.

Moreover, "created things" will, he maintains, "endure as long as God wills that they should have an existence and continuance,"¹⁸ and gives "length of days for ever and ever." He declares of such, "It is the Father of all who *imparts* [gives] continuance for ever and ever on those who are saved."¹⁹ As to the "bestowed" life he adds:

"For life does not arise from us, nor from our own nature; but it is *bestowed* according to the grace of God. And therefore he who shall preserve the life *bestowed* upon him, and give thanks to Him who *imparted* it, shall receive also length of days for ever and ever. . . . But he who shall reject it, and prove himself ungrateful to his Maker, inasmuch as he has been created, and has not recognised Him who *bestowed* [the gift upon him], deprives himself of the [privilege of] continuance for ever and ever."²⁰

6. "PERPETUAL DURATION" IS UNENDING "EXISTENCE."—His argument is amplified and enforced in section four, where Irenaeus asserts that "the soul herself is not life, but partakes in that life *bestowed* upon her by God." And he adds:

"When God therefore *bestows* life and perpetual duration, it comes to pass that even souls which did not previously exist should henceforth endure [for ever], since God has both willed that they should exist, and should continue in existence."²¹

That is the declared basis of "the continued duration of the soul."²²

IV. Multiple Arguments for Conditional Immortality

1. UNION WITH GOD PREREQUISITE TO IMMORTALITY.—

Book three turns even more fully to declaring "the truth." Chapter four refers to the Second Advent, when Christ "shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged," and with "eternal fire" pre-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 34, secs. 2, 3, p. 411.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sec. 3, p. 411.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 411, 412. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

²¹ *Ibid.*, sec. 4, p. 412. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

²² *Ibid.*

pared for those who pervert truth, and "despise His father and His Advent."²³ But to the redeemed He comes to restore "liberty to men" and to bestow on them "the inheritance of incorruption."²⁴ And in chapter eleven Irenaeus speaks of the four gospels as the "four pillars" of the church, "breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh."²⁵ And in chapter eighteen he states, "Unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility."²⁶

Irenaeus alludes to the "disobedience of the one man [Adam] who was originally moulded from virgin soil," and thus "many were made sinners, and forfeited life."²⁷ Then in chapter nineteen he refers to those who have not known "Emmanuel" and are thus "deprived of His *gift*, which is eternal life." They are "debtors to death," not having obtained "the antidote of life."²⁸ Then he states:

"For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are, so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons?"²⁹

Irenaeus recognizes the full deity of Christ as Life-giver, who "is Himself in His own right, beyond all men who ever lived, God, and Lord, and King Eternal."³⁰ There is remarkable clarity all the way through.

2. MUST SENSE DEPENDENCE UPON THE LIFE-GIVER.—In alluding to Jonah, chapter twenty, who was not left to "perish" in the whale, Irenaeus declares that God allowed "man to be swallowed by the great whale, who was the author of transgression." This, says Irenaeus, was done "that man, receiving

²³ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 4, sec. 2, p. 417.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, sec. 3, p. 418.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, sec. 8, p. 428.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, sec. 7, p. 448.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, sec. 1, p. 448. (*Italics supplied.*)

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 448, 449.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 2, p. 449.

an unhoped-for salvation from God, might rise from the dead, and glorify God." Our salvation, he again insists, is "derived" from God. And why?—"that no flesh should glory in the Lord's presence," and suppose that "the incorruptibility which belongs to him is his own naturally," and thus judge himself equal to God.³¹

The purpose of God was that man, "attaining to the resurrection from the dead," and sensing the "source of his deliverance," shall glorify God, and though "mortal and weak" shall obtain "from Him the *gift* of incorruptibility," for "He [God] is immortal and powerful to such a degree as to confer immortality upon what is mortal, and eternity upon what is temporal."³² Thus mortal man, "who had been disobedient to God, and being cast off from immortality, then obtained mercy."³³

3. ADAM SEPARATED FROM TREE LEST HE BE "IMMORTAL SINNER."—In chapter twenty-three Irenæus deals with the fall of man, who "had been created by God that he might live." But, "losing life" after the Fall, God did not leave him "abandoned to death." Provision was made for the "second man" (Christ) to "bind the strong man" (Satan), and having "spoiled his goods," Christ thus provides a way of salvation. The first Adam was deceived under the "colour of immortality."³⁴ Or differently stated, in "the case of Adam," he was "beguiled by another under the *pretext* of immortality."³⁵

Thus God "drove him out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life." And, Why? "Because He pitied him, [and did not desire] that he should continue a sinner for ever, nor that the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil interminable and irremediable."³⁶ Thus it was that Adam came to receive "new life." And thus the "last enemy" is to be "destroyed." So "salvation is death's

³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 20, sec. 1, pp. 449, 450.

³² *Ibid.*, sec. 2, p. 450.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 23, sec. 1, pp. 455, 456.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, sec. 5, p. 457. (*Italics supplied.*)

³⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 6, p. 457.

destruction. When therefore the Lord vivifies man, that is, Adam," death is destroyed.³⁷

4. BELIEVING AND OBEDIENT "HONOURED WITH IMMORTALITY."—In book four, chapter eight, addressing himself to Marcion's fallacies, Irenaeus declares that "those who disallow his [Abraham's] salvation, and frame the idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham, are outside the kingdom of God, and are disinherited from [the gift of] incorruption."³⁸ For, he continues, Christ "Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance."³⁹

Life in Christ is the continuing strain. Thus in chapter eleven Irenaeus says that to the wicked "He assigned everlasting perdition by cutting them off from life."⁴⁰ But he assures the obedient that "He grants to those who follow and serve Him life and incorruption and eternal glory."⁴¹ And he adds, at the close of chapter fifteen, that "those who have obeyed and believed on Him should be honoured with immortality,"⁴² while in chapter eighteen he refers to those who have "the hope of the resurrection to eternity."⁴³

5. GIFT OF IMMORTALITY RESTRICTED TO BELIEVERS.—In chapter twenty Irenaeus tells how "man might attain to immortality, having been invested with the paternal light," and states that God "*confers* [upon him] incorruption for eternal life." And he adds that "the means of life is found in fellowship with God." Then he declares, "Men therefore shall see God, that they may live, *being made immortal* by that sight."⁴⁴ On the contrary, "The punishment of those who do not believe the Word of God, and despise His advent, and are turned away backwards, is increased; being not merely temporal, but rendered also eternal."⁴⁵

³⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 7, p. 457.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 8, sec. 1, p. 471. (Brackets in original.)

³⁹ *Ibid.*, sec. 2, p. 471.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, sec. 4, p. 475.

⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. 15, sec. 2, p. 480.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, sec. 1, p. 478.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, sec. 5, p. 486.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 20, secs. 2, 5, 6, pp. 488, 489. (Italics supplied.)

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, sec. 2, p. 501.



Then this thought is added on the immortality of the righteous: "For they all received a penny each man, having [stamped upon it] the royal image and superscription, the knowledge of the Son of God, which is immortality."⁴⁶ On the contrary, those who do not come to God "cannot receive His immortality."⁴⁷ Christ, the "perfect bread," Irenæus adds interestingly, provides for us the "Bread of immortality."⁴⁸ Irenæus presses on the point that man's disobedience "is his death."⁴⁹ And he asks the searching question, "How, again, can he [created, mortal man] be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker?"⁵⁰

6. ETERNAL FIRE FOR SATAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS.—Chapter forty opens by declaring that God "has prepared the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him." But "impenitent" man will also share this "eternal fire and outer darkness."⁵¹ In the same chapter it is also twice called a "furnace of fire," "prepared for the devil and his angels," but including "those persons who deserve it."⁵² Then Irenæus appeals to men to "be converted, and come to repentance, and cease from evil," that they might "have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality."⁵³

7. IMMORTALITY RECEIVED ONLY THROUGH CHRIST.—And now in the final book five, chapter one (on "Christ Alone Is Able to Teach Divine Things, and to Redeem Us"), Irenæus further counters Gnosticism and praises Christ the Creator as "the only best and good Being," who has "*the gift of immortality.*" He has redeemed "us by His own blood," by "giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh," thus "attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and *bestowing*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 36, sec. 7, p. 518. (Brackets in original.)

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 37, sec. 6, p. 520.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 38, sec. 1, p. 521.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 39, sec. 1, p. 522.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 2, pp. 522, 523.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 40, sec. 1, p. 523.

⁵² *Ibid.*, sec. 2, p. 524.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, chap. 41, sec. 3, p. 525.

upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly." Then Irenaeus declares impressively, "All the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin."⁶⁴

Striking again, in chapter two, at the Gnostic depreciation of the flesh, he chides the heretics who despise the provision of God and "disallow the salvation of the flesh, and treat with contempt its regeneration." Then he asks, "How can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the *gift* of God, which is life eternal?"⁶⁵ His own view is crystal clear. Immortality as a conferred gift is a continuing strain running all through the treatise.

8. GOD WHO GIVES "EARTHLY" LIFE, CAN BESTOW IMMORTALITY.—In chapter three (on "The Power and Glory of God" to "Render Our Body a Participator of the Resurrection, and of Immortality," and to "Bestow Upon It the Enjoyment of Immortality") Irenaeus once more affirms Christ's ability as Creator to "reinstat[e] again [through resurrection] those who had a former existence," in this present life, and chides those who "maintain the incapacity of flesh to receive the life granted by God." Man, Irenaeus insists, is an "infirm being, and mortal by nature," while God by contrast is "immortal and powerful." Irenaeus asserts that "if He does not vivify what is mortal, and does not bring back the corruptible to incorruption, He is not a God of power."⁶⁶ He climaxes his argument by saying:

"For that the flesh can really partake of life, is shown from the fact of its being alive; for it lives on, as long as it is God's purpose that it should do so. It is manifest, too, that God has the power to confer life upon it, inasmuch as He grants life to us who are in existence. And, therefore, since the Lord has power to infuse life into what He has fashioned, and since the flesh is capable of being quickened, what remains to prevent its participating in incorruption, which is a blissful and never-ending life granted by God?"⁶⁷

Thus he bore witness against the theory of a merely spiritual resurrection, already being agitated in Alexandria.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, book 5, chap. 1, sec. 1, pp. 526, 527.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, secs. 2, 3, pp. 528, 529.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, secs. 2, 3, p. 529.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 3, p. 530.

V. Fate of Wicked Is Final Annihilation

1. DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN BODY AND SOUL.—We now come to one of two instances where it is claimed that Irenaeus teaches the later view of the immortality of the soul. Chapter seven deals with the resurrection of the flesh. After telling how Christ rose in “the substance of the flesh,” as attested by “the marks of the nails and the opening in His side,” Irenaeus affirms that He shall also “raise us up by His own power,” and adds that He will “also quicken your mortal bodies.” Then he declares immediately:

“What, then, are mortal bodies? Can they be souls? Nay, for souls are incorporeal when put in comparison with mortal bodies; for God ‘breathed into the face of man the breath of life, and man became a living soul.’ Now the breath of life is an incorporeal thing. And certainly they cannot maintain that the very breath of life is mortal. Therefore David says, ‘My soul also shall live to Him,’ *just as if its substance were immortal.*”⁵⁸

Irenaeus proceeds to contrast the “spirit” with the “mortal body,” which later in death “is decomposed.” “For to die is . . . to become henceforth breathless, inanimate, and devoid of motion, and to melt away into those [component parts] from which also it derived the commencement of [its] substance.” But this is not true of “soul, for it is the breath of life; nor to the spirit” for it is “the life of those who receive it.” Wherefore it is the “mortal” body which is “decomposed gradually into the earth from which it is taken,”⁵⁹ and which is quickened, or resurrected, in incorruption. Just as a “grain of wheat, is sown in the earth and decays,” so our bodies, “through the Spirit’s instrumentality,” rise and come forth to “perpetual life.”⁶⁰ Then “our face shall see the face of the Lord (note 9: Grabe, Massuet, and Stieren prefer to read, “the face of the living God”), and shall rejoice with joy unspeakable.”⁶¹

Irenaeus is so lucid that he cannot be misunderstood.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, sec. 1, pp. 532, 533. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 2, p. 533.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

2. IRENAEUS' DEFINITION OF DEATH.—Several chapters amplify but do not add to what Irenaeus has said. In chapter twenty-seven he deals with "The Future Judgment by Christ," and "The Eternal Punishment of Unbelievers." Adverting to the parable of the tares, in which the wicked are burned up with "unquenchable fire," and to the parable of the sheep and the goats, in which the goats are sent "into everlasting [*aiōnion*] fire, which has been prepared by His Father for the devil and his angels,"⁶² Irenaeus then gives this definition of "death":

"Separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store. Those, therefore, who cast away by apostasy these forementioned things, being in fact destitute of all good, do experience every kind of punishment. God, however, does not punish them immediately of Himself, but that punishment falls upon them because they are destitute of all that is good. Now, good things are eternal and without end with God, and therefore the loss of these is also eternal and never-ending."⁶³

3. SECOND DEATH—HELL, LAKE OF FIRE, ETERNAL FIRE.—This "eternal (*aiōnion*) fire," frequently alluded to, is in chapter twenty-eight explained as the final "lake of fire."⁶⁴ And in chapter twenty-five Irenaeus equates "hell," the "lake of fire," and "eternal fire," which he previously stated has been "prepared for every kind of apostasy." Thus: "'And death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death.' Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord styled eternal fire."⁶⁵

4. FINAL ANNIHILATION OF THE WICKED.—Some have claimed that when Irenaeus here, and elsewhere, refers to *aiōnion* fire and *aiōnion* punishment, he means *Eternal Torment*, and not destruction. But such overlook the definitive declarations of Irenaeus' systematic coverage, which show conclusively that by *aiōnion* punishment he did not mean eternal punishing, but rather punishment in the world to come that

⁶² *Ibid.*, chap. 27, sec. 1, p. 556.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, sec. 2, p. 556.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 28, sec. 2, p. 557.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, sec. 2, p. 566.

ends in cessation of being. The *first* death cuts man off from a life of but few years' duration—a life that is due to die. But the *second* death cuts the sinner off from eternal life, and is consequently an eternal death. This is attested by Dr. Philip Schaff, who states Irenæus' position impressively:

"It is therefore the more remarkable that the doctrine of future eternal punishment was not taught . . . so far as we know, nor the doctrine of universal restoration; but on the other hand, the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked was clearly taught by so eminent a man as Irenæus."⁶⁶

And Edward Beecher, after recording a similar conclusion, remarks on the "very great reluctance in the ranks of the orthodox, in modern times, to concede that he was a defender of the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked."⁶⁷

Dean Frederic W. Farrar likewise adds that Irenæus—"uses the phrase 'eternal punishment,' or 'eternal fire,' as all use those phrases who accept the Bible; and in one passage he says that 'the good things of God, being eternal and endless, the *privation of them* also is eternal and endless.' Certainly this passage shows his opinion that the 'pain of loss' (as we all believe) may be eternal and endless."⁶⁸

5. FRUITION OF ALL HOPES AND PROVISIONS.—Then, in the new heaven and new earth of Revelation 20, to follow, there will be no more death, or sorrow, or pain, for all those things will have passed away forever. He cites Isaiah 65 as referring to the same new heaven and new earth, in which there will henceforth be "no remembrance of the former, neither shall the heart think about them." In this present earth "the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation." At that glad day the redeemed "truly rise from the dead, and not allegorically." "Disciplined beforehand for incorruption" they actually rise in glorious incorruption and immortality at that time.⁶⁹ Such was Irenæus' concept of life, death, and destiny—most explicit of the Early Church Fathers.

⁶⁶ Schaff, *op. cit.*, pp. 194, 195.

⁶⁷ Beecher, *The Scriptural Doctrine of Retribution*, p. 198.

⁶⁸ Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, pp. 239, 240. (Italics supplied.)

⁶⁹ Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, book 5, chap. 35, sec. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 566.

Novatian of Rome—Conditionalist Opponent of Cornelius

I. Novatian—Immortality of God and Mortality of Man

During the Decian persecution (*c.* A.D. 250) many professed Christians denied the faith and deserted the church. Then when the storm had passed, many such sought readmission to the church. The laxer party, predominant at Rome, favored readmission without delay or discipline. This created a crisis.

By this time the church and her ordinances had come increasingly to be regarded as the medium of salvation. Her baptism and her communion were the keys by which Heaven was opened or closed. Moreover, the church had become crowded with those seeking to escape the "endless woe" for the wicked now being stressed by some—albeit they were more willing to avoid it by penance and ceremony than by obedience and love. Such could not endure tribulation, and the reviving of pagan persecution led to widespread denial of the faith. Should they be rejected as apostates? In any event, how could they be saved from the "unconsuming flames" of Hell?

NOVATIAN—PROTESTS APOSTASY; CALLS FOR REFORM.
—NOVATIAN (A.D. 210-280), prominent presbyter of Rome, vigorously opposed this laxity on the part of the indulgent Cornelius, newly elected bishop of Rome, and insisted on a vigorous exclusion of the *lapsi*—the weak who had fallen from the faith under civil pressure. However, he withdrew his



Novatian of Rome—Stresses the Immortality of God and the Mortality of Man; Must Attain Immortality.



Arnobius of Africa—Boon of Immortality Is God's Gift; Incorrigibly Wicked to Be Extinguished.

protest when he was overwhelmed. He disavowed the authority of Cornelius and the validity of Catholic baptism. Eventually Novatian was consecrated bishop of the rival party, including numerous priests at Carthage. As such, he was really the first antipope.

The bulk of the churches in Italy, Africa, and the East adhered to Cornelius, but the Novatian party formed a strong organization in Northern Africa and Asia Minor, constituting themselves the "true church," with congregations at Carthage, Alexandria, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Phrygia, Gaul, and Spain. This Novatian movement persisted for more than two hundred years, or into the sixth century.

The Novatians believed largely as others. The issue was over laxity of discipline, not doctrine. But they came increasingly to believe that the nominal churches had become apostate, and insisted on rebaptism—and the tide of baptismal regeneration was running strongly at this time. Novatian was really a third-century Puritan, the founder of the Cathari ("pure"). His birthplace is unknown, possibly Phrygia. He is said to have

been a Stoic prior to his conversion to Christianity, but the evidence adduced is questionable. He is supposed to have died a martyr, as church historian Socrates states.¹

In any event Novatian became one of the conspicuous characters of the third century. Even his enemies recognized his integrity and admitted to his being doctrinally sound. He was an apostle of unrelenting discipline, and was "heretical" in that he disturbed the calm of the churches by calling for reform. That is why opprobrious epithets were hurled at him.

II. Arguments Based on Natures of Creator and Creature

Novatian's well-known *Treatise Concerning the Trinity*, written about A.D. 257, comprises thirty-one chapters. The first portion deals with the "Rule of Truth or Faith"—really his creed, in which God is set forth as the "absolutely perfect Creator of all things." Novatian ascribes to Him the attributes of *eternity*, unity, goodness, immutability, *immortality*, and spirituality. The second and major section concerns Jesus Christ, promised in the Old Testament and manifested in the New, and proving that He is truly God and truly man. The closing section treats on the Holy Spirit and His operations. Man is then discussed in his relation to the Deity.

I. MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE BROUGHT "MORTALITY."—Chapter one describes God as the "absolutely perfect Founder of all things," showing the "intelligence of the Artificer." And at the close of the manifold works of Creation, man was brought forth, "made in the image of God," with "mind, and reason, and foresight," and an "earthly" body. God willed and provided "that he alone should be free." But, lest he through "unbounded freedom should fall into peril," God "laid down a command" concerning the fruit of one tree. And man "was forewarned that evil would arise if perchance he should exercise his free will, in the contempt of the law that was given."

¹ Socrates, *The Ecclesiastical History*, book 4, chap. 28, in *NPNF*, 2d series, vol. 2, p. 249.

So the law was "added," that "an unbridled liberty might not break forth even to a contempt of the Giver." Thus man was given complete power of choice, with resultant "worthy rewards and a deserved punishment" for his conduct. But because of his wrong choice "*mortality*" came upon him, for he had sought to be as God, under the influence of "perverse counsel."²

2. EXPELLED FROM EDEN TO FORESTALL "IMMORTALITY OF GUILT."—Next, man's hope of future recovery and "salvation in Christ" are presented.³ Man was expelled from Eden to prevent any further access to the tree of life, so as to forestall "immortality of guilt," or immortal sin. In Novatian's words:

"Lest, living for ever without Christ's previous pardon of his sins, he should always bear about with him for his punishment an *immortality of guilt.*"⁴

Novatian then discusses the "higher regions," declared to be the abode of the angels, while "beneath the earth," he adds, "there is a place whither the souls of the just and the unjust are taken, conscious of the anticipated doom of future judgment."⁵

3. GOD, WITHOUT BEGINNING OR END, IS CONSEQUENTLY "IMMORTAL."—Chapter two deals with God as "pervading all things, and moving all things, and quickening all things," and "transcending the mind of man." God is without "any beginning," so consequently He is without "an ending." He is "always eternal," and "unbounded." Being "without beginning," He "has no time." Thus Novatian concludes, "He is on that account immortal," and does "not come to an end."⁶ After an apostrophe of praise that is ornately eloquent,⁷ Nova-

² Novatian, *A Treatise Concerning the Trinity*, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 5, pp. 611, 612.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 612.

⁴ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, p. 612.

⁷ It reads: "What can you say of Him, who is loftier than all sublimity, and higher than all height, and deeper than all depth, and clearer than all light, and brighter than all brightness, more brilliant than all splendour, stronger than all strength, more powerful than all power, and more mighty than all might, and greater than all majesty, and more potent than all potency,

tian closes by repeating that God, "without any beginning or end of time, controls, by the highest and most perfect reason, the naturally linked causes of things, so as to result in benefit to all."⁸

4. GOD "INCORRUPTIBLE" AND THEREFORE "IMMORTAL."—Chapters three and four are devoted to proving from Scripture the Creatorship and other attributes of God. In this connection Novatian cites 1 Timothy 1:17—"Now unto the King eternal, *immortal*, invisible, the only wise God." Again he stresses the fact that "because He is *incorruptible*, He is therefore *immortal*."⁹ Here, in Novatian's involved description, he elaborates on the "*incorruptibility*" and "*immortality*" of God:

"Because He is incorruptible, He is therefore immortal; and because He is immortal, He is certainly also incorruptible,—each being involved by turns in the other, with itself and in itself, by a mutual connection, and prolonged by a vicarious concatenation to the condition of eternity; immortality arising from incorruption, as well as incorruption coming from immortality."¹⁰

Chapter five touches on God's wrath against the sin of fallen and corrupted man. When He "threatens" it is that "by these threats men are recalled to rectitude." So Novatian insists that those things which in men are "faulty and corrupting," "cannot exert the force of corruptibility" upon God.¹¹

5. MAN MADE WITH "MATERIALS OF MORTALITY."—Turning now, in chapter ten, to Jesus Christ our Lord, the Creator of all things, Novatian holds that He is both "Son of God and truly man."¹² And referring to the "law of resurrection" for man, Novatian shows that Christ arose with the "very body" with which He went into the tomb. Thus a "law of resurrection is established." In this way the "mortality of guilt is put away" for us.¹³ But Christ, in contrast, has "life in Himself," which

and richer than all riches, more wise than all wisdom, and more benignant than all kindness, better than all goodness, juster than all justice, more merciful than all clemency?" (*ibid.*, p. 613).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 615. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 615.

¹² *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 619.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 620.

man cannot have "in him after the example of God the Father, because he [man] is not glorious in eternity, but made with the *materials of mortality*." ¹⁴

6. WORD OF CHRIST "AFFORDS IMMORTALITY" FOR MAN.—Another argument, in chapter fifteen, for the immortal deity of Christ and the mortality of finite man, is presented in the following significant statement:

"If Christ is only man, how does He say, 'If any man shall keep my word, he shall not see death for ever?' Not to see death for ever! what is this but immortality? But immortality is the associate of divinity, because both the divinity is immortal, and immortality is the fruit of divinity. For every man is mortal; and immortality cannot be from that which is mortal. Therefore from Christ, as a mortal man, immortality cannot arise. 'But,' says He, 'whosoever keepeth my word, shall not see death for ever'; therefore the word of Christ affords immortality, and by immortality affords divinity. But although it is not possible to maintain that one who is himself mortal can make another immortal, yet this word of Christ not only sets forth, but affords immortality: certainly He is not man only who gives immortality, which if He were only man He could not give." ¹⁵

Novatian's definition of "immortality" is to be noted: it is, "not to see death for ever," and this condition is conferred on mortal man by Christ. That, of course, is the essence of Conditionalism.

7. MAN "DESTINED" FOR "ATTAINMENT" OF EVERLASTING LIFE.—In meeting a "common heresy" of his time—that Christ "was only man"—Novatian asks, "If Christ was only man, how is it that He Himself says, 'And every one that believeth in me shall not die for evermore?' " This he follows up with the statement:

"Whence, if on the one hand He is man only, as the heretics will have it, how shall not anybody who believes in Him *die eternally*, since he who trusts in man is held to be accursed? Or on the other, if he is not accursed, but rather, as it is read, *destined for the attainment of everlasting life*, Christ is not man only, but God also, in whom he who believes both lays aside all risk of curse, and *attains to the fruit of righteousness*." ¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, p. 623. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 15, p. 624.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 625.

So in this connection, to "die eternally" is set forth as the fate of the unrepentant wicked.

8. HUMANITY DIED, NOT DEITY, ON THE CROSS.—Novatian's closely reasoned yet elaborate argument for the eternal pre-existence and complete deity of Christ extends over many chapters, and compasses the whole range of Scripture. But in chapter twenty-five Novatian introduces another argument—that while Christ died for us, the Deity in Christ did not die, because "God cannot be admitted to have died."¹⁷ Then he draws the conclusion:

"But when Scripture determines, as we have frequently shown, that He is not only God, but man also, it follows that what is immortal may be held to have remained uncorrupted."¹⁸

This contention Novatian restates in a slightly different phrasing: "It was not that in Christ that died which is God, but that in Him died which is man." Next he refers to man, and the fact that a fellow man cannot kill the soul (Matt. 10:28). Then Novatian adds that it would be impossible to slay the "Word of God." So it was the "human nature in Christ that was put to death," but "the Word in Him was not drawn down into mortality." So the divine and immortal part of Christ, as God, was *not* "extinguished" while His body died. Then he concludes, "For the power of death is broken when the authority of immortality intervenes."¹⁹

Such was another of Novatian's interesting arguments for the deity of Christ. Then he adds, in chapter twenty-nine, that the eternal Holy Spirit can "produce our bodies at the resurrection of immortality." For by Him (the Holy Spirit) our bodies "advance to immortality."²⁰ Thus the conferring of immortality is the combined work of each Person of the Godhead.

Some may question the propriety of including Novatian

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, p. 636.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 29, p. 641.

here, inasmuch as he is commonly regarded as a "heretic." But his "heresy," it is to be remembered, consisted of his determined opposition to Cornelius, bishop of Rome, over the readmission of unrepentant deserters (*lapsi*) into the church—not over Novatian's doctrinal beliefs. Furthermore, the charges of heresy came from Cornelius, and Novatian's enemies. Many, like Neander, have doubted their validity.

It is also to be remembered that Novatian was chosen by the entire clergy of Rome to write in their name the "Letter" addressed to Cyprian about A.D. 250.²¹ This Cyprian himself states.²² It was written during the vacancy in the Roman bishopric, after the death of Fabian and before the election of Cornelius.²³ This shows the confidence of the clergy in him at that time. Novatian's "heresy" was therefore not over doctrine, but over discipline in relation to the bishop of Rome. And Novatian was a Conditionalist.

III. Arabian Believers in Soul's Death and Resurrection

As shown elsewhere by the latter half of the third century the doctrine of the Innate Immortality of the soul had now become widely received by many professing Christians. And, proportionately, the primitive doctrine of the basic mortality of man and the sleep of the dead was being increasingly abandoned. Nevertheless, there were those who persisted in holding to the earlier faith, though, according to Eusebius, they were now counted as heretical. One such group was down in Arabia, and illustrates the other side of the picture. This is the clear record of EUSEBIUS (c. A.D. 260-340),²⁴ bishop of Caesarea, and "father of church history." He himself was an

²¹ See *Epistle XXX, The Roman Clergy to Cyprian*, in *ANF*, vol. 5, pp. 308-311.

²² See *The Epistles of Cyprian* LI, sec. 5, in *ANF*, vol. 5, p. 328.

²³ Coxe, in his Introductory Note (*ANF*, vol. 5, p. 607), says that in the interim between Fabian and Cornelius, Novatian served as "vicar-general,"^{li} presiding over the Roman presbytery, as their "secretary for foreign affairs."

²⁴ EUSEBIUS PAMPHILI (c. 260-340), of vast learning, was a teacher in the theological school in Caesarea. He used the great library of his teacher, Pamphilius, for the sources for his famous church history. As bishop of Caesarea he occupied a prominent place in the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325). He was seated at the right of Emperor Constantine, and made the opening address. He was the leader of the moderate party in the controversy over Arianism. However, he believed in Innate Immortality, and in ultimate restorationism for all the wicked.

Immortal-Soulist and Restorationist—following Origen—hence his castigation of others as holders of “false opinions.”

“About the same time [latter part of third century] others arose in Arabia putting forward a doctrine foreign to the truth. They said that during the present time the human soul dies and perishes with the body, but that at the time of the resurrection they will be renewed together. And at that time also a synod of considerable size assembled, and Origen, being again invited thither, spoke publicly on the question with such effect that the opinions of those who had formerly fallen were changed.”²⁵

Four points are to be noted: (1) The group in Arabia denied the life and consciousness of the dead between death and the resurrection. (2) Both soul and body live again at the resurrection. (3) Believers in this unconsciousness-in-death doctrine were still sufficiently numerous to require a considerable council to repress them. (4) Origen was “again” requested to discuss the soul question in this council—indicating that at least once previously he had been called upon to defend this new doctrine of the immortality of the soul, for it was chiefly through Origen and Tertullian that this teaching came to be established in the church.

1. CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY “NO NEW DOCTRINE.”—Dr. Johann Neander, of Heidelberg and Berlin, likewise refers to this Arabian group. He states that this older teaching—and the fact that immortality is not based upon the “nature of the soul,” but is a “gift” from God—was the Hebrew teaching of the Old Testament, “transferred from Judaism to Christianity” and “predominant” from “ancient times.” He says:

“We may here mention another instance of this kind, that a controversy had been excited by a party among the Arabian Christians, who asserted, that the human soul died with the body and that it was to be revived only with the body at the resurrection,—an ancient Jewish notion. Perhaps, too, in these districts, whose situation brought them into frequent contact with the Jews, it was no new doctrine, but one which had prevailed there from ancient times.”²⁶

2. ORIGEN ESTABLISHED “IMMORTAL-SOULISM” IN ALEX-

²⁵ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, book 6, chap. 37, in *NPNF*, 2d series, vol. 1, p. 279. Cf. Mosheim, *Historical Commentaries on the State of Christianity* (Vidal tr.), vol. 2, pp. 242, 243.

²⁶ Johann A. W. Neander, *Church History*, vol. 1, p. 710.

ANDRIA.—Neander²⁷ frankly states the historical fact that it was Origen who “first” fastened this “doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul” upon the church at Alexandria, which later obtained “universal acceptance.” Meanwhile the Arabian Christians, who had “maintained the old opinion,” now appeared “heretical,” though the “old,” formerly predominant opinion, had “previously” “pronounced itself against” “the new opinion.” That was why a “great synod” was necessary, and Origen’s presence requested to quiet the controversy.

“Perhaps it was first brought about through the influence of Origen,—in whose system the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, which is related to God, held an important place,—that this latter doctrine now became here the more general one, and the small party who still adhered to the old opinion, appeared to be heretical; if the case really was, that the prevailing voice had expressed itself thus early against them. Hence it is explained, how the convention of a *great synod* came to be thought necessary for the purpose of settling disputes. As they could not come to an agreement, Origen was sent for; and it was brought about by his influence, that the opponents of the soul’s natural immortality confessed and renounced their error.”²⁸

So it was that this lay Christian group in Arabia held fast to the ancient doctrine of the sleep of the dead, and denied the new inherent-immortality-of-the-soul postulate. Not until this intensive effort by Origen, in the middle of the third century, were they weaned away from it. Thus the controversy continued in different parts of the empire.

IV. *Clementine Homilies*—Fictional Views by “Clement’s” Fabricated Characters

The Clementine Homilies, falsely attributed to Clement of Rome, usually dated in the third century, are early ecclesiastical “fictional” writings. In other words, the characters are not real, but fabricated. And the identity of the author is

²⁷ The noted German church historian Dr. Johann A. W. Neander (1777-1850) was a converted Jew and hence well qualified to state the original Jewish doctrine on immortality. He was professor of theology at Heidelberg, and of church history at Berlin. As to his competency, his *General History of the Christian Religion and Church* earned for him the title Prince of Church Historians.

²⁸ Neander, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

not known. Many of the *Homilies* are in dialogue form, one character arguing against the viewpoint of another. They are clearly fictional, so their words cannot be taken as an authoritative statement of the theological beliefs of the day.

They do, however, demonstrate that the question of Innate Immortality was already under discussion, and constitute a reflection of variant views of the time. Inherent immortality was denied by one of Clement's characters, "Simon Magus," meaning the "magician," and affirmed by another—"Peter," as he was named. Their historical prototypes, whose names are thus invoked, are not, of course, to be held accountable.²⁹ The *Homilies* clearly contain "much legendary matter."³⁰

I. CLASHING VIEWS AND UNCERTAIN DATING.—There has been much discussion as to whether the Clementine *Recognitions* (in ten books) preceded his *Homilies* (in twenty discourses), or the reverse.³¹ It is generally believed that there is a definite connection between the two.³² The *Recognitions* are likewise usually dated in the third century. Many feel that there is probably a common background—a single basic unit—for the Clementina in a lost document.³³

Translator Thomas Smith dubs "Clement's" writings "strange and curious documents," not intended to be, or presented as, historical facts. He says:

"Choosing the disciples of Christ and their followers as his principal characters, he ["Clement"] has put into their mouths the most important of his beliefs, and woven the whole together by a thread of fictitious narrative."³⁴

Smith also cites Hilgenfeld as believing that there are

²⁹ *The Clementine Homilies*, in *ANF*, vol. 8, pp. 223-346; Edgar J. Goodspeed, *History of Early Christian Literature*, pp. 127, 128. Best of all is Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 1, pp. 59-63. Cf. H. J. Schoeps, *Urgemeinde, Judentum, Gnosis* (1936); also B. Rehm, *Geichische Christliche Schriftsteller*, vol. 42.

³⁰ *ODCC*, art. "Clementine Literature," p. 301.

³¹ B. M. Riddle, "Introductory Note to the Pseudo-Clementine Literature," in *ANF*, vol. 8, pp. 69, 70; *ODCC*, *loc. cit.* Hilgenfeld, Cave, Whiston, Rosenmüller, and Stäudlin held that the *Recognitions* came first, but Ulhorn, Schmidt, and Cullmann place the *Homilies* first. See also Möhler, Lücke, and Schliemann.

³² *ODCC*, *loc. cit.*

³³ *Ibid.* Cf. A. C. Headlam, *The Clementine Literature*, in *J.T.S.*, iii, and F. J. A. Hort, *Notes Introductory to the Story of the Clementine Literature*. See also "Introductory Notice to the *Recognitions* of Clement," in *ANF*, vol. 8, p. 73.

³⁴ "Introductory Notice," in *ANF*, vol. 8, p. 73.

"many interpolated passages of a much later date."³⁵ The testimony of the *Homilies* is not therefore determinative. *But it is a record of the talk of the times.* With such an understanding, let us now note the testimony of these documents.

2. RANGES OVER CREATION, LIFE, DEATH, PUNISHMENT.—Homily I raises the question of life and death—"ceasing to exist"—and punishment. And it queries "whether the soul is immortal or mortal."³⁶ In Homily II "Clement" raises the issue of "Future Rewards and Punishments," and still presses on the question of whether the soul is "immortal," and of present "punishment" in Hell.³⁷ This appears further in chapter twenty-nine, where "Simon Magus" is not convinced that the "soul of man is immortal."³⁸ Then in Homily III "Clement" turns to the problem of the punishment of the wicked, and has "Simon" observe:

"He [God] brings the soul to Himself by reason of His love towards it. And although it be sinful, it is His nature to save it, after it has been suitably punished for the deeds it hath done. But if any one shall deny Him, or in any other way be guilty of impiety against Him, and then shall repent, he shall be punished indeed for the sins he hath committed against Him, but he shall be saved, because he turned and lived."³⁹

3. WICKED CONSUMED AND DESTROYED BY FIRE.—Clement makes "Simon" quite positive in his declaration concerning the complete destruction of the wicked:

"But those who do not repent shall be destroyed by the punishment of fire, even though in all other things they are most holy. But, as I said, at an appointed time a fifth ["Perhaps, rather, 'the greater;'" note 2] part, being punished with eternal fire, shall be *consumed*. For they cannot endure for ever who have been impious against the one God."⁴⁰

It is observed, by translator Riddle, that "the first twenty-eight chapters of this homily have no exact parallel in the *Recognitions*, much of the matter is peculiar to this work"—the *Homilies*.⁴¹

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *The Clementine Homilies*, chap. 4, in *ANF*, vol. 8, pp. 223, 224.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 231.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 29, p. 234.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 240.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 239, footnote 1.

4. CLEMENT SETS FORTH "PETER" AS IMMORTAL-SOULIST.—

There are periodic allusions to God as the Creator of man (Homily III, chapter six), creation by divine "fiat" (chapter thirty-three), also to the "Wiles of the Devil" (chapter eight), the "Eating of the Forbidden Fruit" (chapter twenty-one), Adam's responsibility (chapter eighteen), and how man may become "immortal," have "continuance," and become "incorruptible" (chapter thirty-seven).

Homily IX (chapter fourteen) calls on Christians to repent in view of the "judgment," for at the time of the judgment the wicked will be punished with unquenchable fire and the righteous receive their recompense in the flesh. Then in Homily XI (chapter eleven) Clement projects "Peter" as contending that all souls are immortal—"the soul even of the wicked is immortal"—with endless torture as unavoidable punishment. Here are "Peter's" alleged words, as fabricated by Clement:

"And though by the dissolution of the body you should escape punishment, how shall you be able by corruption to flee from your soul, which is incorruptible? For the soul even of the wicked is immortal, for whom it were better not to have it incorruptible. For, being punished with endless torture under unquenchable fire, and never dying, it can receive no end of its misery."⁴²

This thought is continued in chapter sixteen, where Clement refers to "universal judgment" and "eternal punishments."⁴³ But in Homily XV (chapter eight) he contrasts man's choice as of "the present *evil* or the future goods."⁴⁴

5. FREE WILL EXPLAINS PRESENCE OF SIN AND DEATH.—

Next, in Homily XIX, chapter fifteen ("Sin the Cause of Evil"), Clement contends that "had not man sinned" death "would not have come to the race." He adds that man "lost his immortality on account of his sin," with suffering and death coming as a consequence. Then he asks and answers this question:

"Why, then, was the nature of man made at the beginning capable of death? I will tell you, because of free-will; for if we were not capable of

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 286.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

death, we could not, as being immortal, be punished on account of our voluntary sin."⁴⁶

6. IMMORTALIZED THROUGH CHRIST'S REIGN.—Finally, in Homily XIX, chapter twenty ("Pain and Death the Result of Sin"), Clement has "Peter" saying that "death is the separation of the soul from the body," with the body "dissolved," but the soul continuing on in existence. Then he states, curiously, "Man becomes immortal through the prevalence of the peaceful reign of Christ." And he adds, "He will suffer no pain, so that he will not be mortal."⁴⁷

Two conflicting viewpoints are thus set forth—framed in the words of fictional characters. So the dual evidence of the *Homilies*, as pertains to our quest, ends. It is not conclusive, but it mirrors the clashing views of the time. And some feel that "Clement" himself favors the Conditionalist view.

7. SUBSEQUENT "RECOGNITIONS" SUSTAIN "HOMILIES" PORTRAYAL.—Inasmuch as the Clementine *Recognitions* probably sprang from the same author, since they have the same fictional characters and characteristics, it is well to note that in the *Recognitions* the same "Simon" (Magus) still questions "whether the soul is immortal."⁴⁸ That was being strongly advocated in the third century. And in chapter forty-one, after acknowledging the "judgment to come," "Simon," used as a symbol of the wickedness of the Early Church, continues to challenge the claim that "the soul is immortal," and declares, "For as soon as they die, their soul shall at the same time be *extinguished*."⁴⁹ Then in book four (chapter twelve) "Peter" says that Enoch was "translated to immortality."⁵⁰ But in book five (chapter twenty-eight), "Eternity of Punishments," the fabricated Immortal-Soulist "Peter" is made to say:

"But if any persist in impiety till the end of life, then as soon as the

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁴⁸ *Recognitions of Clement* (Thomas Smith, tr.), book 3, chap. 39, in *ANF*, vol. 8, p. 124. In the *Recognitions*, Gnostic elements are to be noted. (Cf. *ODCC*, p. 301; also *ANF*, vol. 8, pp. 69-74.)

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 125. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

soul, which is immortal, departs, it shall pay the penalty of its persistence in impiety. For even the souls of the impious are immortal, though perhaps they themselves would wish them to end with their bodies. But it is not so; for they endure without end the torments of eternal fire, and to their destruction they have not the quality of mortality."⁸⁰

Here, then, is the same conflict of views by the same opposing characters.

Thus it is seen that the Eternal-Torment concept is already coupled as an inseparable corollary to the basic Immortal-Soulism in the contention of this developing second school of thought. Then to this "Peter" adds, in book nine, chapter thirteen ("Retribution Here or Hereafter"), that "their punishment He [God] defers to the future." He closes by referring to the "punishment of eternal fire in hell; and there their souls shall seek repentance, where they shall not be able to find it."⁸¹ So there is continuance in the clashing testimony of "Clement's" two treatises. They simply constitute a reflection of the eddying currents of the times, and of the paralleling but conflicting schools on the nature and destiny of man, already in vogue. Innate Immortal-Soulism is definitely on the gain.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Arnobius of Africa—Last Ante-Nicene Conditionalist Spokesman

I. Final Extinction of Incurably Wicked

Approximately a century after the martyrdom of Irenaeus, ARNOBIUS (fl. c. A.D. 297-310), of Africa, called the Elder, one of the bright ante-Nicene lights of the first decade of the fourth century, brought forth a notable confession of his newly espoused Christian faith. Arnobius, last great apologist of the ante-Nicene period of the Early Church, had been a prominent pagan professor of rhetoric at Sicca, in Northern Africa, near Carthage. There his philosophic learning and eloquence had brought him fame during the reign of Diocletian.

Sicca at that time was notorious for its bestial foulness and polytheism, in vivid contrast with the strict purity enjoined by the Christians. While a pagan, Arnobius was noted for his intense hatred of Christianity. Like Saul of Tarsus, he fought it relentlessly. Nevertheless, he admired the heroic courage of the martyrs under the terrible Diocletian persecution, which sought to overwhelm Christianity in a deluge of flame and blood in what was paganism's dying struggle. And, like a new Saul of Tarsus, Arnobius at last embraced Christianity, evidently between A.D. 303 and 310. And again, like the converted Paul before him, he was at first distrusted by those whom he had long opposed, and was refused baptism and admission into the church.

In order to dispel their fears Arnobius published an open attack on paganism called *Adversus Gentes* ("Against the

Pagans"), in which he boldly avowed his new convictions, as proof of his sincerity. This courageous act, as well as its apologetic power and logical appeal, removed all doubt, and the doors of the church were thrown open to him. That is what we are now to survey, for an important section bears on the problem of immortality. Arnobius was an enthusiastic convert, and his fearless voice carried weight. He became the teacher of the brilliant Lactantius, to be noted later in our survey, whom he profoundly influenced. Incidentally, Arnobius had in turn been influenced by Lucretius.

1. MEETS PAGANISM ON ITS OWN GROUND.—Arnobius' book, though written before his actual baptism, is a statement of mature convictions. Here on heathenism's own ground he meets the arguments, the taunts and reproaches, brought against Christianity by the stalwarts of paganism. And he not only repels their charges but undertakes to persuade them that Christianity is fully demonstrable by evidence. He does not quote heavily from Scripture, which was largely unknown to his readers—and would not be admitted as evidence by them anyway—so he presents the *facts* of Scripture rather than actual quotations from the text. He seeks to impress them with the fatal weakness and fallacy of their own reasoning, and the folly of polytheism. He contends that Christians, who worship the self-existent God, are not less religious than those who worship subordinate deities.

Heathenism, he earnestly contends, is outworn and must inevitably disappear. His is the most sustained counterattack upon the contemporary pagan cults, and especially the "cult of the emperor," written by any of the Church Fathers. Dr. George E. McCracken, of Drake University, in his recent *Arnobius of Sicca—the Case Against the Pagans* (1949), calls it "in many ways the most remarkable patristic document now extant,"¹ although it was long neglected and many attempts were made to discredit it.

¹ George E. McCracken, *Arnobius of Sicca*, Introduction, p. 3, in the new Catholic "Ancient Christian Writers" series.

2. IMMORTALITY FOR RIGHTEOUS; EXTINCTION FOR WICKED.

—It is not to be wondered that many negative criticisms have been leveled against this treatise, for Arnobius was a militant Conditionalist. Putting aside all the reserves and circumlocutions of the Greek Fathers, he was the first Latin writer of note to declare clearly the doctrine of the ultimate extinction of the wicked. He taught explicitly that the incorrigibly impenitent sinner is destined, after a due and determined period of punishment, to pass out of existence.

To Arnobius the human soul, with its inherent sin and imperfection, could not of itself be inherently immortal, becoming such only by the grace and gift of God. For the unrepentant unrighteous there must be a second death, a Gehenna of unquenchable fire, which gradually consumes and at last extinguishes the wicked, without leaving any "residuum."

3. MAN CREATED CAPABLE OF EITHER DESTINY.—Arnobius took the position of the "intermediate" nature of man—that he was originally created neither mortal nor immortal, but capable of either destiny.³ Such a teaching was, of course, detrimental to his reputation in those quarters where universal Innate-Immortality of the soul was now being militantly taught, with the consequent Eternal-Torment-of-the-wicked and restorationist corollaries. But Arnobius was in line with Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Theophilus of Antioch, and the entire group of the Apostolic Fathers before them. Thus the two concepts of the nature and destiny of man were now militantly existent side by side, until the gradual and final submergence of Conditionalism came about.

Thereafter, for centuries, there were only occasional Conditionalist voices. (See Tabular Chart F, on page 758, for Arnobius' allocation.) But we may also well note here Prof. Charles Hudson's significant observation that Arnobius' views were not censured until long after his day, and that the opposite (Innate-Immortality) view was not made a declared universal Catholic

³ Likewise with Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Nemesius, which see.

article of faith for twelve hundred years thereafter,³ that is, not until the Bull of Leo X, in 1513, in connection with the Fifth Lateran Council. The lateness of the timing is most significant.

That Arnobius' views were as here stated is recognized, for example, by Anglican Dean F. W. Farrar, of Canterbury, who asks: "Can there be any reasonable doubt as to the opinion of Arnobius? . . . It appears, then, that this Christian apologist did not hold endless torments to be a matter of faith."⁴ And Catholic Dr. McCracken states, "For Arnobius the Soul can only be mortal and he appears of the opinion that this view is orthodox Christianity."⁵ Others, like Dr. S. D. F. Salmond, could be similarly cited.⁶

The beginning of Arnobius' career as a Christian we know, but not the end. The terrible persecution then sweeping over the Roman world and engulfing unnumbered Christians probably included Arnobius among them, for we hear no more of him. And he could scarcely have failed to have been heard from further had he lived.

II. Comprehensive Survey of Arnobius' Arguments and Evidences

I. ARNOBIUS PRESENTS THE CASE FOR CHRIST.—Point by point and step by step in book one, in logical sequences and close reasoning, Arnobius answers the charges and insinuations of paganism by counterattacking and exposing the foibles and fallacies of the heathen gods of wood and stone he had formerly worshipped, and boldly avows his faith in Christ as both God and man. "Led into the paths of truth," he now declares of Christ, "He is God in reality and without any shadow of a doubt."⁷ Then He appeared among men "in human shape,"

³ Hudson, *Debt and Grace*, p. 303.

⁴ Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 248.

⁵ McCracken, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁶ S. D. F. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 594, 595.

⁷ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen*, book 1, chaps. 39, 42, in *ANF*, vol. 6, pp. 423, 424.

taking the "form of man," and was "cut off by death," dying in our stead on the cross,⁸ that we might have *life*.

2. CHRIST OPENED THE GATE OF IMMORTALITY.—In book two, coming directly to the issue of immortality, Arnobius declares that it is Christ who has "prepared for you a path (note 4: or "opened paths . . . and the gates of immortality") to heaven, and the immortality for which you long." He carefully explains that "He neither extended the light of life to all, nor delivered *all* from the danger which threatens them through ignorance (note 1: "danger of destruction")."⁹ Some refuse. And as the pagans believe Plato, so, Arnobius states, "we [Christians] believe and confide in Christ." And "if we choose to compare cause with cause, we are better able to point out what we have followed in Christ, than *you to point out* what you *have followed* in the philosophers."¹⁰ And he decries their "speculative quibblings."¹¹

Book two was clearly the peak of his presentation. Here Arnobius argues at length on the "error" of the Platonic claim of the soul's inherent immortality. Once lost in the blindness and error of paganism himself, and devoted to the worship of images brought forth from the furnace and made with human hands, Arnobius now rejoices in the truth of Life Only in Christ, who is our Supreme Creator.¹² He had already clearly declared that the pagan gods "are not immortal." And that death "ends all things, and takes away life from every sentient being."¹³ And Arnobius was a fitting champion of the cause he had espoused.

3. SEARCHING QUESTIONS ON LIFE, DEATH, AND HEREAFTER.—In chapters thirteen and fourteen Arnobius propounds a cumulative series of searching questions leading up to the question of the destruction of the wicked. Addressing the pagan philosophers, particularly the followers of Plato and Pythagoras, he points out the inconsistency of their quibbles, and turns the argument upon them. Hear him:

⁸ *Ibid.*, chaps. 60, 62, pp. 430, 431.

⁹ *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 1, pp. 433, 434.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, p. 437.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 12, p. 438.

¹² Cf. book 1, chap. 39, p. 423.

¹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, p. 418.

"Do you dare to laugh at us because we revere and worship the Creator and Lord of the universe, and because we commit and entrust our hopes to Him? . . . Does he [Plato] not exhort the soul to flee from earth? . . .

"Do you dare to laugh at us, because we say that there will be a resurrection of the dead? . . . Does not he [Plato] say that, when the world has begun to rise out of the west and tend towards the east, men will again burst forth from the bosom of the earth? . . .

"Do you dare to laugh at us because we see to the salvation of our souls? . . . You, indeed, do not take every pain for their safety."¹⁴

"Do you dare to laugh at us when we speak of hell, and fires, which cannot be quenched? . . . Does not your Plato also, in the book which he wrote on the immortality of the soul, name the rivers Acheron, Styx, Cocytus, and Pyriphlegethon, and assert that in them souls are rolled along, engulfed, and burned up?"¹⁵

4. A DESTRUCTION THAT LEAVES NOTHING BEHIND.—After referring to paganism's problem of a soul that is "immortal, everlasting, and without bodily substance," yet being "punished" and made to "suffer pain," Arnobius asks, "But what man does not see that that which is immortal, which is simple (note 17: "i.e., not compounded of soul and body"), cannot be subject to any pain; that that, on the contrary, cannot be immortal which does suffer pain?" He then speaks of those who, being cast into the flames, are "annihilated," and "pass away" in "everlasting destruction."¹⁶

5. ULTIMATE "ANNIHILATION" IS MAN'S "REAL DEATH."
—Arnobius next declares that according to Christ "theirs [the souls'] is an *intermediate state*"—there are those that "may on the one hand perish if they have not known God, and on the other be delivered from death if they have given heed to His threats and proffered favours."¹⁷ Then follows Arnobius' clear definition of man's "*real death*":

"This is man's real death, *this which leaves nothing behind*.¹⁸ For that which is seen by the eyes is *only* a separation of soul from body, not the last end—annihilation; this, I say, is man's real death, when souls which know not God shall be consumed in long-protracted torment with raging fire."¹⁹

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 13, p. 439.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, p. 439.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 439, 440.

¹⁸ "*Haec nihil residuum faciens.*"

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

Arnobius clearly distinguishes between the first death and the final death, and declares that in the true, or final, death of the wicked there is "nothing left behind"—absolute destruction after the final death agonies. He warns against the presumption of Innate Immortality. Continuance of life, he holds, is *conditional*.

6. MAN NOT "IMMORTAL" LIKE GOD; ONLY "CREATURES."
—Next Arnobius speaks of those who are obsessed with "an extravagant opinion of themselves, that souls are immortal, next in point of rank to the God and ruler of the world."²⁰ Then Arnobius appeals earnestly to the Platonists to lay aside their prideful claim to being "immortal," which is only a pretense, and to remember that we are but "creatures." He appeals:

"Will you lay aside your habitual arrogance [note 12: "that pride of yours"], O men, who claim God as your Father, and maintain that you are immortal, just as He is? Will you inquire, examine, search what you are yourselves, whose you are, of what parentage you are supposed to be, what you do in the world, in what way you are born, how you leap to life? Will you, laying aside *all* partiality, consider in the silence of your thoughts that *we are creatures* either quite like the rest, or separated by no great difference?"²¹

7. SWEEPING SURVEY OF PAGANISM'S INADEQUACY.—With keen satire Arnobius then launches into a vivid description of human nature as it is, to refute the argument then current for the "extravagant opinion" of the soul's immortality.²² In sweeping strokes he paints the over-all picture—covering whole chapters. Follow it:

Is man divine? Why is he half animal?²³ Is the soul a thing of reason? Let man show himself rational.²⁴ Then the arguments from human skills, the sciences and the fine arts, and man's hopes and fears, are duly considered.²⁵ Also the argument from the nature of the soul as a simple substance—as "divine, and therefore immortal"; and from its supposed reminiscences of a pre-existent state.²⁶ Then there are the practical tendencies

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 15, p. 440.

²¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 440.

²² *Ibid.*, chap. 15, p. 440.

²³ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 440.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 17, p. 441.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, chaps. 18-26, pp. 441-444.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chaps. 27, 28, p. 444.

of this and that belief. Must not whatever is immortal, be ever free? What reason for alarm, then, if such a soul should revel in vice? ²⁷

And what is the ground of hope if, as Epicurus held, the soul must die? ²⁸ The "golden mean" is a mingled hope and fear, based on the doctrine of a soul that must either live or die. ²⁹ Are souls indeed a divine and royal offspring? How unroyally do they behave! ³⁰ And the notion of a pre-existent state is met with a long list of questions as to why man is reduced to his present state. ³¹ If God created souls not only *where* they are, but *as* they are, is He not the author of evil? ³² But are there too few good men to allow the belief that they alone will live? Then by what rule of induction do they immortalize the race? ³³ It is a compelling outline.

8. CLAIMS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF IMMORTAL-SOULISTS.—

Touching in chapter sixteen on the popular concept of transmigration of "immortal souls" from man to beast, ³⁴ and the position in chapter twenty-two that the souls of men are divine and therefore immortal, ³⁵ Arnobius then discusses, in chapters twenty-six and twenty-seven, the nature of the soul and the concept that the soul is deprived of remembrance of former existences by being "fettered" with the human body. ³⁶ Next, he deals with the claim that sentence cannot be pronounced on "immortal" souls who, on such a premise, are equal with immortal God, "seeing there is the same immortality in both." ³⁷

9. "ENRICHED WITH ETERNAL LIFE" THROUGH CHRIST.—

And now, in chapter thirty-two, he observes that "souls are set [born] not far from the gaping jaws of death," but that "they can, nevertheless, have their lives prolonged by the favour and kindness of the Supreme Ruler if only they try and study to know Him." And he urges them to "be ready for that which

²⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 29, p. 445.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 30, p. 445.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chaps. 31-34, pp. 446, 447.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, chaps. 37, 38, p. 448.

³¹ *Ibid.*, chaps. 39-42, pp. 449, 450.

³² *Ibid.*, chaps. 43-48, pp. 450-452.

³³ *Ibid.*, chaps. 49, 50, pp. 452, 453.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 440.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 22, p. 442.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, chaps. 26, 27, p. 444.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 29, p. 445.

shall be given.”³⁸ In chapter thirty-four he reminds his readers that neither Plato nor any other philosopher had promised “a way to escape death,” but that Christ has “not only promised it” but can bring His promises to reality, thus to “escape a death of suffering” and “be enriched with eternal life.”³⁹

III. Boon of Immortality Is God's Gift

1. ASSURED IMMORTALITY VERSUS BLOTTING OUT OF EXISTENCE.—In chapter thirty-six Arnobius alludes to the claim that “gods are said to be immortal,” but to the Christian, “the boon [note 16: “bestowed, assured immortality”] of immortality is God's gift” upon those who receive it. “In the same way will He deign to confer eternal life upon souls also, although fell death seems able to cut them off and blot them out of existence in utter annihilation [note 18: “reduced to nothing with annihilation, not to be returned from”].”⁴⁰

2. “GIFT” OF IMMORTALITY IS THE “GRANT” OF GOD.—Denying in chapter forty-eight that souls are the “offspring of God,” Arnobius repeats his contention, in chapter fifty-three, that souls “are of a neutral character”—that is, capable of entering into either life or death—and are made “subject to the law of death” and “perishable.” But, he adds, they “are gifted with immortality, if they rest their hope of so great a gift on God Supreme, who alone has power to grant such *blessings*.”⁴¹ Here again the Conditionalist aspect is pointed up by the frequently used “if.”

3. EITHER SALVATION OR DESTRUCTION AWAITS ALL.—Bringing his lengthy argument toward its close, after declaring that “nothing is made by Him except that which is for the well-being of all,”⁴² and denying the contention that “the world

³⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 32, p. 446.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 34, p. 447.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 36, p. 447.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 53, p. 454.

⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. 55, p. 455.

was not created, and will never perish,"⁴³ Arnobius earnestly appeals to his pagan readers with the plea:

"Your interests are in jeopardy,—the salvation, I mean, of your souls; and unless you give yourselves to seek to know the Supreme God, a cruel death awaits you when freed from the bonds of body, not bringing sudden annihilation, but destroying by the bitterness of its grievous and long-protracted punishment."⁴⁴

But the "long-protracted punishment" ends in ultimate cessation of being, he repeatedly attests.

4. GOD ALONE IS IMMORTAL AND EVERLASTING.—Warning against the "empty delusions" of pagan promises—that "souls become divine, and are freed from the law of death" by certain performances—Arnobius solemnly declares:

"None but the Almighty God can preserve souls; nor is any one besides who can give them length of days, and grant to them also a spirit which shall never die, except He who alone is immortal and everlasting and restricted by no limit of time."⁴⁵

5. THE GREAT ALTERNATIVES ARE PLACED BEFORE ALL.—Declaring in chapter sixty-three that "Christ was sent by God for this end, that He might deliver unhappy souls from ruin and destruction"—souls in a "mortal state before He came"⁴⁶—Arnobius says that this deliverance is free to all who will accept. "To all, He says, the fountain of life is open, and no one is hindered or kept back from drinking."⁴⁷ But he warns:

"God compels no one, terrifies no one with overpowering fear. For our salvation is not necessary to Him, so that He would gain anything or suffer any loss, if He either made us divine, or allowed us to be annihilated and destroyed by corruption."⁴⁸

6. "PRIZE OF IMMORTALITY" IS BEFORE US.—Then he adds this word: "The Almighty Master of the World has determined that this should be the way of salvation,—this the door, so to say, of life; by Him alone is there access."⁴⁹ Such is the "prize of immortality" set before us.⁵⁰

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chap. 56, p. 455.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 61, p. 457.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 62, pp. 457, 458.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 63, p. 458.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 64, p. 458.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 65, p. 459.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 66, p. 459.

Arnobius ends his remarkable appeal by declaring:

“The times, full of dangers, urge us, and fatal penalties threaten us; let us flee for safety to God our Saviour, without demanding the reason of *the offered gift*. When that at stake is our soul’s salvation and our own interests, something must be done even without reason. . . . Let us commit ourselves to God, . . . lest . . . the last day steal upon us, and we be found in the jaws of our enemy, death.⁵¹

And all this, be it ever remembered, was not only set forth as Arnobius’ faith, but was accepted as sufficient evidence of his Christianity to open for him the gates of Christian church membership. Nor is it to be forgotten that these two views of man were both held at the time, and that the view of Arnobius, and that of the many holding with him, was accepted as equally the Christian view. Conditionalism, therefore, still was one of the accepted and recorded beliefs of the church in the early fourth century.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 78, p. 463.

Athenagoras—First Ecclesiastic to Assert Innate Immortality

Second of Three Schools of Theological Trilemma Emerges —Crystallizes Dogma of Eternal Torment of the Wicked

Beginning with this chapter we will next trace the revolutionary new *Universal Innate-Immortality* postulate that henceforth parallels and ere long overshadows the original Conditionalist position (subapostolic and ante-Nicene), which we have been following up to this point. This innovation eventuates in the *second* school in the theological trilemma, now in process of development. And a few chapters further on the *third* school in this intriguing theological trilemma will emerge. From thenceforth these three schools continue concurrently in ceaseless conflict. And they persist to this day.

The developments may be visualized on Chart F (page 758), as they are allocated and grouped in their respective categories. To this the reader is invited to turn for the chronological placement (in the vertical columns), as well as the categorical arrangement in the paralleling (or horizontal) readings. Identification and classification for each individual and group in the respective categories, or schools of thought, under survey may thus be had. By referring to this comprehensive chart the over-all relationships and the cumulative and massed evidence needed for balanced conclusions may easily be visualized.

We now turn to the contrasting side of the picture—a very important side. The concept of the Innate Immortality of the soul as a “*Christian*” doctrine did not appear in patristic



Athenagoras — First Ecclesiastic to Assert Universal Innate - Immortality Postulate, Based on Platonism.



Tertullian of Carthage — Projector of Eternal-Torment Corollary for Immortal Wicked, With Mystic Fire.

literature until toward the close of the second century. That long lapse of time is highly significant. And then it was introduced by a Greek philosopher who, while nominally accepting Christianity, insofar as it did not invalidate his former views, retained the fundamental philosophic concept of Neoplatonism on the nature and destiny of man—despite its definite conflict with prevalent Christian teachings. The pathfinder on this revolutionary road was Athenagoras—apparently the first ecclesiastic to embrace the Immortal-Soul postulate publicly, and to advocate it on a purely Platonic basis. As stated in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, his theology is “strongly tinged with Platonism.”¹

However, it was Tertullian of Carthage (d. c. A.D. 240) who gave the great impetus to this emphasis, tying in with it the dogma of the endless torment of the lost. Then finally

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 2, p. 831, art. “Athenagoras.”

came Augustine of Hippo (d. A.D. 430), whose great influence brought about the general acceptance by the church at large of the belief in the deathlessness of all souls, and also its fiery corollary of the endless existence and Eternal Torment of the reprobate. (For Athenagoras' chronological and categorical placement, see Tabular Chart F, on page 758.)

I. Athenagoras—Pathfinder on Revolutionary Road

Though facts are meager concerning the life of ATHENAGORAS (c. A.D. 127-190), he was born in Athens and was well trained in pagan Greek learning, especially in the philosophy of Plato. Accepting the Christian faith, he became a catechist in Alexandria. He wrote a conciliatory *Apology* (c. A.D. 177) to the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, and his son Commodus. While Athenagoras refuted the false charges against Christians, his main burden seemed to be to show that Christianity and Platonism are really in fundamental accord, and that the great essentials of Platonic philosophy are actually embraced in Christianity. His was a philosophical defense of his new faith, and his writings were of an altogether new order, increasingly saturated with the teaching and phraseology of Plato, unquestionably the source of his views.

He sought to unite these two streams that they might flow on together. And while his arguments did not carry much weight in his own day, and his name was not well known to his own generation, his contentions gradually gained credence, as others began to press this revolutionary and really alien doctrine of Innate Immortality that involved the eternal existence of the reprobate. Although the foundations are barely discernible in the *Apology* presented to the emperor, Immortal-Soulism came out into the open in unabashed phrasing and argument in Athenagoras' later treatise on *The Resurrection*. It was obviously a development that he himself did not at first envision. He was unquestionably the spearhead in the intrusion of universal Innate Immortality into the Christian Church.

1. BASES CONTENTION ON PHILOSOPHY, NOT SCRIPTURE.—

It is significant that Athenagoras based his contention as to the immortality of the soul, not on Scripture, but on philosophical argument. Precision in theological language had not yet found an established format. Athenagoras was clearly groping. But his main premise was that God's purpose in creating man was that he should *live*—that the divine purpose of man's existence is existence itself. And God's purpose, he contended, cannot be defeated. It must be accomplished. It is therefore impossible for man to cease to exist. Such is his argument.

Athenagoras does not make perpetual existence a consequence of righteousness or the triumph of morality. Rather, all men must live on forever—good and evil, happy and miserable. His was a *compulsory* immortality, so that in wickedness there is interminable suffering never to any advantage. On the contrary, the gospel that had previously been preached conditions unending existence on holiness. But this is obtained only by the exercise of human freedom and the development of character. Immortality depends upon the triumph of righteousness. Men of purpose lay hold upon it; it is not forced upon them. It is a gift of God.

Athenagoras implies that, as the wicked must live forever, they therefore live a life of eternal misery. But he does not state so dogmatically. That was left for others. Nevertheless, such reasoning is the source and origin of the dogma of eternal misery, as based on such premises. We reiterate the argument in all its baldness: *The wicked must be miserable forever, because they must live forever; and they must live forever because God made them for the primary purpose of living!* That is the logical fruitage of the acceptance of the Platonic pagan philosophy of Immortal-Soulism.

Now note the boldness of Athenagoras' commitment in contrast with the Conditionalist position of the Apostolic Fathers, and then that of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus at the outset of the ante-Nicene period. It is as the contrast of darkness and light. Let us trace it in detail.

2. REPEATEDLY USES PLATO'S "IMMORTAL SOUL" PHRASING.

—In his earlier *Plea*, or *Apology*, Athenagoras did not personally use either the thought or the phrase "immortal soul." But a decade later it is repeatedly invoked in his *Treatise . . . on the Resurrection*. A profound change of view had obviously taken place in the interim. And here it is employed, not once, but nine times in one short treatise. Moreover, Athenagoras drafts in addition upon a whole battery of supporting expressions—variations of the one basic concept—in order to sustain this Platonic concept that he had now espoused. First observe this initial "immortal soul" phrasing, in about nine variant forms, that constituted both the thought and the terminology of Plato, whence it was clearly derived:

"Continuance of being in immortality" (chap. 13, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 156).

"He [God] made man of an immortal soul and a body" (*ibid.*).

"Composed of an immortal soul and a body" (chap. 15, p. 157).

"Wholly incorruptible and immortal" (chap. 16, p. 157).

"From the first created immortal" (*ibid.*).

"Continuance with immortality" (*ibid.*).

"The soul to remain by itself immortal" (chap. 20, p. 160).

"An immortal nature" (chap. 23, p. 161).

"Possessed of an immortal soul and rational judgment" (chap. 24, p. 162).

3. BATTERY OF SUPPORTING EQUIVALENTS EMPLOYED.—

—And here are about seventeen supporting equivalents, running through this revolutionary *Resurrection* treatise, used to buttress this central concept: "Not liable to corruption" (chap. 10, p. 154); "continuance of being" (chap. 12, p. 155); "perpetual duration" (*ibid.*); "perpetual existence" (*ibid.*); "preserved for ever" (*ibid.*); "remains in existence" (*ibid.*); "continuance of being" (chap. 13, p. 156); "continuance for ever" (*ibid.*); "must continue for ever" (chap. 15, p. 157); "interminable duration of the soul" (*ibid.*); "perpetual continuance" (*ibid.*); "continuance of being" (chap. 16, p. 157); "continuance according to its peculiar nature" (*ibid.*); "continuance invariable and unchangeable" (*ibid.*); "continue to exist without end" (*ibid.*); "unchangeable continuance"

(*ibid.*); and "incapable of dissolution" (chap. 20, p. 160)—and all found within the compass of only six pages!

Surely a more complete committal to this thesis could scarcely be imagined than these seventeen supplemental expressions afford, added to the nine—or twenty-six in all. Language could hardly be more absolute, conclusive, or incriminatory. Athenagoras assuredly and openly now taught the innate, inalienable, indefeasible immortality of the soul. And he was, so far as can be determined, the first Christian ecclesiastic so to do. And this was about the year A.D. 187.

II. Earlier *Plea*—Devoid of "Innate Immortality" Concept

The thirty-two chapters of Athenagoras' earlier "Apology," or *Embassy*, constitute a really masterful "Plea," as it was commonly called, presented to the emperor. Athenagoras is careful to designate himself, in the title, as "Philosopher and Christian." His was a practiced pen and he was a polished writer. He protests the unjust discrimination shown toward Christians, and asks that they be accorded the same treatment as others when accused. Dealing with the three stock charges—of atheism, cannibalism (the "body" and "blood" statements regarding the Eucharist), and immorality—Athenagoras shows that Christians are not atheists, even the pagan poets and philosophers testifying to the unity of a Supreme Being. His favorite, Plato, is cited in particular. The absurdities of polytheism are exposed, and he presents the unity of the Godhead as manifest in three Persons.

Athenagoras shows that pagan gods are but "created" figments, as poets and philosophers admit, along with their acknowledgments that "a thing is either uncreated and eternal, or created and perishable."² He rehearses the absurd representations and impure loves ascribed to the pagan gods. He then states, concerning the "One God, the supreme and uncreated

² Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, chap. 19, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 137.

and eternal One," that "the Deity is immortal, and immoveable, and unalterable."³ Again in chapter twenty-three he presses significantly on the superiority of Plato over other writers. This special fondness obviously leads to his later championship of Plato's Immortal-Soulism.

1. ANGELS ARE CREATED BEINGS; SOME "FELL."—Discussing the angels, Athenagoras says in chapter twenty-four that they were "created by Him [God]," and that "this is the office of the angels,—to exercise providence [watchcare] for God over the things created and ordered by Him." They were "created by God" as "free agents." Some "continued in those things for which God had made and over which He had ordained them"; others outraged both the constitution of their nature and the government entrusted to them," and thus fell.⁴ Then in chapter twenty-seven Athenagoras touches on the "Artifices of the Demons," how they plague the souls of men, and how they "lead men into error."⁵

2. DUBIOUS SETTING OF TERM "IMMORTAL SOUL."—In the same chapter he discusses the "diversity" of pagan views concerning the origin and nature of the "soul"—noted six times in a single paragraph—and uses such terms as "irrational," "fantastic," "delusive," and "empty visions," in describing such views. It is in such a setting and connection that the much-publicized expression, "being immortal," occurs in this sentence:

"And, taking possession of their thoughts, cause to flow in to the mind empty visions as if coming from the idols and the statues; and when, too, a soul of itself, *as being immortal*, moves conformably to reason, either predicting the future or healing the present, the demons claim the glory for themselves."⁶

Obviously that is a pagan, demonic claim, here cited by Athenagoras, *not* an assertion, or fact of truth, setting forth his own position.

³ *Ibid.*, chap. 22, p. 140.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, p. 142.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 27, p. 143.

⁶ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

3. HEATHEN "GODS" SIMPLY DEIFIED MEN.—The heading of chapter twenty-eight is "Heathen Gods Were Simply Men," with chapter twenty-nine as "Proof of the Same From the Poets." Chapter thirty offers "Reasons Why Divinity Has Been Ascribed to Men." Thus he disposes of the "gods."

4. FATE OF SINNERS WORSE THAN "ANNIHILATION."—In chapter thirty-one Athenagoras' initial statement appears on the hereafter of "those whose life is directed towards God," who seek to be "blameless and irreproachable." After stating that all things are known to God, he says:

"We are persuaded that when we are removed ["released"] from the present life we shall live *another life, better* than the present one, and heavenly, not earthly (since we shall abide near God, and with God, free from all change or suffering in the soul . . .)." ⁷

Then, speaking of the punishment of the sinner, "falling with the rest," Athenagoras declares his fate to be "*a worse one and in fire.*" And he adds: "For God has not made us as sheep or beasts of burden, a mere by-work, and that we should perish and be annihilated." ⁸

So the souls of men live on indefeasibly.

5. OUR BODIES TO BE RECONSTRUCTED AT RESURRECTION.—Finally, in chapter thirty-six ("Bearing on the Doctrine of the Resurrection"), Athenagoras speaks of those who "believe that our bodies will rise again," and that "the earth will give back the bodies held by it." ⁹ He contrasts such with those who mistakenly believe "there is no resurrection, but calculate on the soul perishing with the body, and being as it were quenched in it." Then he declares that the body will be "punished" along with the soul. And he adds, "It is not our [the Christian's] belief alone that bodies will rise again, but . . . many philosophers also hold the same view." Again he cites Plato as agreeing that "when the dissolution of bodies takes place, they should, from the very same elements of which they were constructed at

⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 31, p. 146.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 36, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 147.

first, be constructed again." ²⁰ This is as far as Athenagoras goes in this earlier *Plea*.

III. *The Resurrection*—Wholly Committed to Innate-Immortality Thesis

In Athenagoras' final work, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, a strong undeviating current of innate Immortal-Soulism, not found in the previous *Plea*, flows throughout the treatise. We therefore pause at the outset to consider the familiar charge of "inconsistency," "vacillation," and "conflicting statements" leveled against Athenagoras' position on immortality. This problem can be rationally explained and fairly answered by recognizing the simple fact that a distinct change of view took place between Athenagoras' earlier *Plea* (c. A.D. 177) and this treatise a decade later (c. A.D. 187). There were inklings before, but never full commitment as here.

We should press the point that *if* the opposing expressions were scattered over both treatises, the charge would have some valid basis. But Athenagoras' Immortal-Soulism is concentrated in this later *Resurrection* discussion. In the interim he had clearly swung over to outright championship of Innate Immortality, and by the same token his former moderate views were abandoned. Athenagoras had made a complete about-face—a reversal of position. And the purpose of this new treatise is obviously to prove the resurrection of man, with soul and body, each constituting an integral part of the whole man, and therefore both sharing in the final, or common, destiny. The revolutionary character of Athenagoras' utterances here justifies a documented presentation.

I. MAN CREATED FOR "PERPETUAL EXISTENCE."—Athenagoras rests his entire case on the premise of the *natural* immortality of man. But he bases this purely on the argument of

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

reason, with no appeal to the authority of Scripture, not even invoking Christ's resurrection as an assurance of ours. He here holds that God's object in making man was that he might *live*. And God's sovereign purpose, Athenagoras contends, cannot be defeated. It is, he insists, *impossible not to exist*. Therefore all men *must* live forever—good and evil, happy and miserable. He thrice states this in chapter twelve:

"For nothing that is endowed with reason and judgment has been created, or is created, for the use of another, whether greater or less than itself, but for the sake of the *life and continuance of the being* itself so created. . . . According to the view which more nearly touches the beings created, He made him [man] for the sake of the life of those created, which is not kindled for a little while and then extinguished."¹¹

And again—

"Since this cause [of man's creation] is seen to lie in *perpetual existence*, the being so created must be preserved for ever doing and experiencing what is suitable to its nature."¹²

2. DUAL PREMISE FOR ETERNAL EXISTENCE.—In presenting his position on the unlimited perpetuity of human existence, which he does as a matter of mere philosophical ethical principle, Athenagoras builds his whole argument on two premises: (1) God's objective in bestowing such existence, and (2) the right employment of the rational nature by those who have received it. Eternity of bliss is for those who have employed their nature in accordance with the divine purpose in bestowing life upon them.

Athenagoras does not, at this stage, dilate on the term of future existence in store for the wicked. He says nothing here about their destruction, nor does he discuss either eternity of suffering or ultimate restoration. The germ of such a theory appeared in his *Plea* but was not developed.

3. GIST OF THE RESURRECTION ARGUMENT.—In his treatise on *The Resurrection of the Dead* (chapter ten) Athenagoras asserts that the resurrection in general is highly advantageous

¹¹ Athenagoras, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, chap. 12, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 155. (Italics supplied.)

¹² *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

to man. In chapter twelve the resurrection change in our being is for the better—nothing can occur to man that would be sufficient reason for his ceasing to be; his life is a proper end, therefore it should not be consumed and cease to be. Chapter thirteen holds that the resurrection effects a continuity of existence, and is just as much in accord with reason as the fact that man should exist at all.

In chapter nineteen it is claimed that the wicked must be punished in another life, for this life is too short and limited for a just recompense. And in chapter twenty-five each individual must be judged for himself, and rewarded or punished according to the good or evil done in this life. Thus the hope of the future is all vested in the resurrection. That Athenagoras places all hope of a future life on the resurrection is evident from these two excerpts:

"The cause of his [man's] creation [the Creator's "purpose" and the nature that man received] is a pledge of his continuance for ever, and this continuance is a pledge of the resurrection, without which man could not continue."¹³

"But it is impossible for him to continue unless he rise again. For if no resurrection were to take place, the nature of men as men would not continue."¹⁴

4. RESURRECTED BODIES WILL BE INCORRUPTIBLE.—In his argument Athenagoras contends that a resurrection is not "impossible for God." And in chapter three ("He Who Could Create, Can Also Raise Up the Dead") he states:

"That same power can reunite what is dissolved, and raise up what is prostrate, and restore the dead to life again, and put the corruptible into a state of incorruptible."¹⁵

Throughout several chapters he holds that the resurrection body differs from the present in that it will be incorruptible, and he maintains that God can and will "raise up and bring together again a body which has been dissolved," and make it "not liable to corruption."¹⁶

¹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 156.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 15, p. 157.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 150.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 154.

5. DESTINED FOR "PERPETUAL DURATION," NOT FINAL EXTINCTION.—In chapter twelve Athenagoras presses the argument for the resurrection, namely, "The Purpose Contemplated in Man's Creation." He was not created "at random," but "for the sake of life and continuance of the being itself so created."¹⁷ God made man "in pursuance of the goodness and wisdom which are conspicuous throughout the creation." And Athenagoras adds that God did not make man to be "kindled for a little while and then extinguished."¹⁸ Men were brought into being for "perpetual duration." Thus:

"To those who bear upon them the image of the Creator Himself, and are endowed with understanding, and blessed with a rational judgment, the Creator has assigned *perpetual duration*, in order that, recognising their own Maker, and His power and skill, and obeying law and justice, they may pass their whole existence free from suffering, in the possession of those qualities with which they have bravely borne their preceding life, although they lived in corruptible and earthly bodies."¹⁹

6. UNCEASING EXISTENCE FORESTALLS ULTIMATE ANNIHILATION.—This being the purpose of man's perpetual existence, ultimate annihilation is consequently unthinkable:

"That which was created for the very purpose of existing and living a life naturally suited to it, since the cause itself [of its existence] is bound up with its nature, and is recognised only in connection with existence itself, can never admit of any cause which shall utterly annihilate its existence. But since this cause is seen to lie in *perpetual existence*, the being so created must be *preserved for ever*, doing and experiencing what is suitable to its nature."²⁰

Then he adds: "For the resurrection is a species of change, and the last of all, and a change for the better of what still remains in existence at that time."²¹

7. PLEDGED CONTINUANCE OF "BEING IN IMMORTALITY."—So in our "present state of existence" we "steadfastly hope for a *continuance of being in immortality*," for Athenagoras contends that He who "fashioned us," "made man of an immortal

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 12, p. 155.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

²⁰ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

²¹ *Ibid.*

soul and a body, and furnished him with understanding and an innate law" ²² suited to "intelligent existence," that he might "continue always" in such contemplation. Then he adds:

"The cause of his [man's] creation is a pledge of his continuance for ever, and this continuance is a pledge of the resurrection, without which man could not continue. So that, from what has been said, it is quite clear that the resurrection is plainly proved by the cause of man's creation, and the purpose of Him who made him." ²³

8. MAN: AN IMMORTAL SOUL IN A PERISHABLE BODY.—Having dealt with "the purpose of God in forming men," Athenagoras now comes, in chapter fifteen, to the "nature of the men created." On this he explicitly declares:

"The whole nature of men in general is composed of an *immortal soul* and a body which was fitted to it in the creation, and if neither to the nature of the soul by itself, nor to the nature of the body separately, has God assigned such a creation or such a life and entire course of existence as this, but to men compounded of the two, in order that they may, when they have passed through their present existence, arrive at one common end, with the same elements of which they are composed at their birth and during life, it unavoidably follows, since one living-being is formed from the two." ²⁴

So the term "immortal soul" is now established. And Athenagoras is the first Christian to use it. It was an epochal development.

9. RESURRECTION IMPERATIVE SO BODY-SOUL MAY CONTINUE FOREVER.—Thus Athenagoras builds up an entire integrated series—man's creation, nature, life, doings, sufferings, existence—and the "end" suited to his nature, which makes it the same as its constitution. Thus: "The parts dissolved [in death] are again united for the constitution of the being." ²⁵ Then he reiterates:

"Man, therefore, who consists of the two parts, must continue for ever. But it is impossible for him to continue unless he rise again. For if no

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 156. (Italics supplied.) Previously stated in *Plea*, chap. 27, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 143.

²³ Athenagoras, *Resurrection*, chap. 13, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 156.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 15, p. 157.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

resurrection were to take place, the nature of men as men would not continue." ²⁶

10. CONTINUITY OF BEING INTERRUPTED BY DEATH.—In chapter sixteen Athenagoras introduces death as a "sleep." "Life," he says at the outset, is "a continuance of being which is interrupted by death and corruption." Some "superior beings," like the angels, "are wholly incorruptible and immortal," and have no interruption. Such are "from the first created immortal, and continue to exist without end." But men "have from their first origin an unchangeable continuance, but in respect of the *body* obtain immortality by means of change." This is what is meant by the "doctrine of the resurrection." ²⁷ That is why "we both await the dissolution of the body, as the sequel to a life of want and corruption, and after this we hope for a continuance with immortality." ²⁸

11. "SLEEP" OF DEATH INVOLVES BLACKOUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS.—Athenagoras introduces this interesting analogy of death and sleep, calling "sleep the brother of death":

"Although the relaxation of the senses and of the physical powers, which naturally takes place in sleep, seems to interrupt the sensational life when men sleep at equal intervals of time, and, as it were, come back to life again, yet we do not refuse to call it life; and for this reason, I suppose, some call *sleep the brother of death.*" ²⁹

Then follows this statement of unconsciousness common to both death and sleep:

"Those who are dead and those who sleep are subject to similar states, as regards at least the stillness and the absence of all sense of the present or the past, or rather of existence itself and their own life." ³⁰

So the continuity of life, followed by the dissolution of death, "involves the resurrection," although suffering is interrupted for a time.

12. REUNION OF BODY AND SOUL NECESSARY FOR RECOMPENSE.—In chapter eighteen man is recognized as clearly ac-

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 157.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

countable to his God and Maker, for "all created things require the attention of the Creator." Man is "accountable for all his actions, and receives for them either reward or punishment." But after the period of dissolution, when the soul is separated from the body, which no longer retains "the remembrance of its actions," soul and body will be "again united," to "receive what . . . has been done by the body, whether good or evil."³¹ Passing over those who expect to "eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," with life to terminate in "utter insensibility," Athenagoras observes that our present moral nature could not in this life bear "a punishment commensurate" with sin, for death "prevents the deserved punishment," that is, "a penalty adequate to these crimes."³²

13. MAN'S PUNISHMENT NOT ASSIGNED TO SOUL ALONE.—In chapter twenty Athenagoras maintains that "Man Must Be Possessed Both of a Body and Soul Hereafter, That the Judgment Passed Upon Him May Be Just."³³ Recognizing the corruptibility of the body with only two possibilities regarding the soul, he says:

"Either death is the entire extinction of life, the soul being dissolved and corrupted along with the body, or the soul remains by itself, incapable of dissolution, of dispersion, of corruption, whilst the body is corrupted and dissolved, retaining no longer any remembrance of past actions, nor sense of what it experienced in connection with the soul."³⁴

But, he continues, if life is ultimately to be "utterly extinguished," the logical drift of such life would be into atheism. And if the soul alone were to be immortal, no judgment would be equitable.³⁵ Punishment must be for the sins done in the body. The same principle would be true of the body alone. But, according to chapter twenty-one, "the life of man is one, though composed of the two."³⁶ Then he adds, in chapter twenty-two, that it is absurd that "reward or punishment . . . should be assigned to the soul alone."³⁷ And he refers again,

³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, p. 159.

³² *Ibid.*, chap. 19, pp. 159, 160.

³³ *Ibid.*, chap. 20, p. 160.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 160.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 22, p. 161.

at the close of chapter twenty-four, to "men possessed of an immortal soul and rational judgment."³⁸

14. RECONSTITUTION OF BODY AND SOUL INTO SAME BEING.—In the concluding chapter (twenty-five), Athenagoras once more reiterates that man is a dual being, composed of two parts in this present life. But "the man cannot be said to exist when the body is dissolved."³⁹ Then comes his summarizing declaration:

"It is absolutely necessary that the end of a man's being should appear in some reconstitution of the two together, and of the same living being. And as this follows of necessity, there must by all means be a resurrection of the bodies which are dead, or even entirely dissolved, and the same men must be formed anew, since the law of nature ordains the end not absolutely, nor as the end of any men whatsoever, but of the same men who passed through the previous life; but it is impossible for the same men to be reconstituted unless the same bodies are restored to the same souls."⁴⁰

15. THOSE FAILING GOD'S OBJECTIVE ARE PUNISHED PROPORTIONATELY.—Thus, in the end, the "intelligent life and rational judgment" of the reconstituted man will "delight unceasingly in the contemplation of *Him who is*"—the eternal God. But that "large number of those who fail of the end that belongs to them does not make void the common lot, since the examination relates to the individual and the reward or punishment of lives ill or well spent, is proportionate to the merit of each."⁴¹

16. DENIES ULTIMATE ANNIHILATION FOR THE WICKED.—Athenagoras does not directly discuss the ultimate fate of the lost, nor does he indicate whether all will ultimately be saved. That is left for Tertullian and his school to declare, and for Augustine to climax. Nor does he consider Restorationism. That is left for Origen and those who follow him. But Athenagoras denies the ultimate annihilation of the wicked. And the body will share in man's eternal destiny. *In this he veers away from Plato, who claims immortality only*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, p. 162.
³⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, p. 162.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
⁴¹ *Ibid.*

for the soul. Plato taught a natural and unconditional immortality of the soul, and dealt with physical and metaphysical factors. Athenagoras deals with moral, practical, and circumstantial elements. But the trend was now clearly set.

17. DISREGARDS AND REPUDIATES THE BIBLICAL "PERISH."
—Attention must be called to Athenagoras' use of the Greek word for "perish." He excelled in Greek, and knew well its meaning. Thus in one place he describes the Epicurean doctrine of annihilation of body and soul by saying that they maintained they are to "perish." In another place he says it has the same meaning as "annihilate." In a third he contrasts that which is perishable with that which is eternal. And in still another he describes the Stoic doctrine (that all things will one day come to an end) by saying they teach that they will perish.⁴²

How then did Athenagoras use the term *perish* when he speaks of both just and unjust? He simply denies that the term can be applied to either class. He says that if the unjust were to perish, it would be equivalent to saying they would be annihilated—a Latin word (*annihilatus*) meaning "destroyed," or "brought to nothing." Accordingly, he boldly says of the unjust as well as the just, "God has not made us . . . that we should perish and be annihilated."⁴³ Yet the Word repeatedly says the wicked will "perish"—and Athenagoras knew the meaning of his own Greek. He therefore flatly contradicted and abandoned the platform of Scripture in introducing his novel doctrine of *eternal life in hell*, even if not expressly stated.

IV. Logical Demands of Athenagoras' Reasoning

His was pre-eminently a rationalistic deduction. Thus: The wicked must be miserable forever, because they must live forever. And they must live forever because God made them

⁴² Athenagoras, *Plea for the Christians*, chaps. 36, 31, 4, 22, in *ANF*, vol. 2, pp. 147, 148, 146, 131, 140.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chap. 31, p. 146.

for the purpose of living. Athenagoras does not advance one text in support—only Plato's sonorous phrasings. With his master he takes his position immovably on the platform that the soul is intrinsically immortal. It *must* continue to live. It was made immortal at creation, and cannot be subjected to death, for it was, and is, and always will be incorruptible. That was his tangent argument. And this was written about A.D. 178.

But Athenagoras added to his master's theory. Plato, as a pagan, dropped the body altogether at death—as a clog, prison, and curse to the soul. But Athenagoras as a Christian was compelled to advance a new or added line of reasoning. To him the body is, indeed, an essential part of man. The body, originally created to be immortal, became mortal through Adam's sin. But Athenagoras held that at the resurrection the bodies of all—*wicked as well as righteous*—will reassume their original immortality. Paul's description of the resurrection of the *just*, the glorious, immortalized change of their natural bodies to fit them for eternal life, is by Athenagoras now applied to describe as well the resurrection of the *unjust*. "The mortal body must put on immortality and incorruption if it is to endure an eternity of pain."

If Athenagoras' reasoning on the inevitability of God's purpose had been followed to its ultimate, it would have led him to Origen's theory of Restorationism, not to Augustine's dogma of Eternal Torment. But, as noted, in Athenagoras' day the notion of a restoration from Hell had not yet been developed. The time had not yet come—not until the human mind was compelled to seek refuge in it from the horrors of Eternal Torment. Only thus could God's object in creating man fail to be defeated. Moreover, God made man for Himself. So Athenagoras said:

"The final cause of an intelligent life and rational judgment, is to be occupied uninterruptedly with those objects to which the natural reason is chiefly and primarily adapted, and to delight unceasingly in the contemplation of *Him who is*, and of His decrees."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Athenagoras, *Resurrection*, chap. 25, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 162.

Following this thought through, all men, however fallen, must in time be restored, in order logically to answer the end for which they were created. Such a consequence was demanded by Athenagoras' principles as verily as the restoration of their bodies to immortality, or the eternal existence of the entire man. But the clear concept of universal Restorationism did not mature for another half century—under the celebrated Origen, likewise of Alexandria. But Athenagoras made the first epochal break.

Tertullian—Projector of Eternal-Torment Corollary

Latin Christianity had its birthplace in Africa. And it was there that the three leading lights of Northern Africa—Tertullian of Carthage, Origen of Alexandria, and Augustine of Hippo—brought Platonic Immortal-Soulism to triumph, but along sharply divergent paths. Omitting Greek-using Origen for the time, let us note the Latin school of North Africa—Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Cyprian, and Augustine—characterized by the use of Latin instead of the Greek in which Christianity was first promulgated.

These men all shifted from emphasis on Greek metaphysics to the overshadowing atmosphere of Roman law. And the Latin Fathers, in contrast with the Greek, usually spoke less of the essential freedom of the will, and attached greater importance to the necessities of government, both human and divine, the foreordination principle in embryo. To the intensive and authoritarian teaching of this group, the dominance of the dogma of the Eternal Torment of the wicked is largely due.

Carthage, home of Tertullian, was one of the great cities of the time, a thriving Christian center, a noted commercial center and rival of Rome—and notoriously corrupt. From Carthage, Christianity spread out over all proconsular Northern Africa. Several councils were held at Carthage, each attended by not less than seventy bishops. But Carthage, it should be repeated, had little of the speculative spirit of Alexandria, home of Origen. And Tertullian was the direct

opposite of Origen, stressing literalism instead of allegorism.

The East, fascinated with subtle questions concerning the Trinity and the person of Christ, never concerned itself overmuch with the problems of law, penalty, atonement, pardon, and retribution. But the Western school, from Tertullian onward, took its stand on eternal punishment as part of the system of law. Thus the foundations of Latin theology were laid, through which Augustinianism, as it came to be called, gained ascendancy in Europe, later giving rise to Calvinism and the systems springing therefrom. So it was in Africa, not Italy; at Carthage, not Rome; and from lawyers and rhetoricians, rather than speculative philosophers, that the Latin Church sprang.

I. Formulation of the Dogma of Endless Torment

TERTULLIAN¹ (c. A.D. 160-240), brilliant and versatile of mind, and master of the Latin tongue, was born in a heathen home at Carthage. He received a liberal Greco-Roman education at Rome, including thorough legal training in Roman jurisprudence and forensic eloquence, and attained eminence as a legal consultant. Returning to Carthage, at about the age of forty, he was attracted by the martyr courage and life of holiness of the Christians, and embraced the Christian faith with all the fiery ardor of his tempestuous temperament. He considered that he had passed from darkness to light, and had no patience with those who fell short of his ideals, spurning any recognized compromise.

Tertullian was first a catechist, then a priest (c. A.D. 192), and finally bishop of Carthage. Doubtless he was the most conspicuous writer of his time, and the first theologian to write in Latin. He was the "great founder"² and father of Latin theology. Having a legally trained mind, he was able to make the Latin tongue, with its characteristic precision,

¹ Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, in full.

² A. Cleveland Coxe, Introductory Note, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 5.

the language of the church. He put Christian thought into Latin, thus laying the foundation upon which Cyprian and Augustine built. He prepared the language for the labors of Jerome, who brought forth the Latin Vulgate, which placed the Western churches on a parity with the East. Thus the Carthaginian School profoundly influenced Christianity for centuries.

A voluminous writer, Tertullian was author of numerous apologetic, theological, polemical, and ascetic works in Latin and some also in Greek. He was a powerful reasoner and a born fighter, being constantly engaged in controversy. He was pre-eminently the polemicist of his generation. And according to Jerome he had a "sharp and vehement temper," and was the fearless champion of Christianity against pagans, Jews, and heretics. He had many adversaries—the Monarchians, who denounced his prophetism while he assailed their views on the Godhead; the pagans, whose practices he exposed and condemned; the Jews, whom he answered; and the Gnostics, some of whose views he shared, though repudiating others.

1. TERTULLIAN'S ESPOUSAL OF MONTANISM.—A few years after Tertullian became a priest, his views underwent an important change. As a reaction against the scandalous laxity in the discipline of the Roman Church under Zephyrinus, Tertullian's rigorous and often eccentric views led him first to sympathize with and then to espouse the moral austerities and enthusiasms of the Montanists.³ He joined them about the year 199. It is supposed that he was driven to them by the envy and abuse of the Roman clergy.⁴

Following this lapse, his writings—about sixteen pre-Montanist and twenty-two Montanist, according to Neander's classification—became more intense, some of them saturated with Montanist phraseology. In fact, he was the great theologian of the movement, which he called the "New Prophecy," while

³ Montanism, named after Montanus, arose in Phrygia about 157, and was a reactionary movement against Gnostic influences. The Montanists inclined toward extravagances, were strongly ascetic, claimed to be recipients of special revelations, and were intrigued by speculation over the last things. They continued until the fifth century.

⁴ Coxe, *loc. cit.*

advocating and systematizing the principles that led to the doctrines of celibacy, asceticism, and penance.

The Montanists, it should be added, claimed to be *restoring* primitive Christianity, whereas the Manichaeans were attempting to *reconstruct* Christianity. The former condemned drunkenness, gluttony, and lust. Driven to despair by the laxity and drift of the church, they became fanatical in zeal for purity and separation, exalting virginity and celibacy as a reformatory reaction.

They lived under the vivid impression of the final catastrophe of the end of the world, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as manifested in their own prophets and prophetesses. They forbade flight in persecution and protested against the growing institutionalism and secularism of the church. (They were formally condemned by Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome.)

2. FIRST TO FORMULATE DOGMA OF ENDLESS TORMENT.—

Under Tertullian the smoldering fires of Immortal-Soulism blazed out, and its Eternal-Torment corollary was projected. He well knew that though the leading Platonic philosophers held "the soul to be immortal" the "crowd" derided the notion, supposing that nothing will survive after death. And, Tertullian observes, sometimes the "wise, too, join with the vulgar crowd in their opinion." Then he adds, "There is nothing after death, according to the school of Epicurus. After death all things come to an end, even death itself, says Seneca to like effect."⁶ So Immortal-Soulism was by no means universal among the pagans. And it encountered opposition.

Tertullian was apparently the first to formulate the doctrine of "traducianism"—the transmission of the soul by propagation from parent to child. To him the soul is "distinct from the body" and is intrinsically "immortal." But more than that, it receives "death by punishment in immortality." And it was Tertullian who first affirmed that *the torments of the*

⁶ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 545.

*lost will be coequal and coexistent with the happiness of the saved.*⁶ And he openly declared a relish for their torture. In dealing with future punishment he introduced a language entirely foreign to Scripture, its source being in this new doctrine.

And to sustain it he confessedly altered the sense of Scripture and the meaning of words, so as to interpret "death" as *eternal misery*, and "destruction" and "consume" as *pain and anguish*. "Hell" became *perpetually dying*, but never dead. In other words, death was simply another phase of endless immortal life. It was immortal suffering, without relief by ultimate cessation; perishing, without ever being destroyed; slaughtered, but never succumbing to oblivion. It was permanence of life under the death penalty. Tertullian was the first to formulate the concept of universal Innate Immortality and Endless Torment into a coordinated system.

3. PERSECUTION FORMS BACKGROUND OF RETRIBUTIVE TORMENT.—A tempest of violent persecution broke upon the church in the mid-second century. The fires of religious fanaticism burst into flame, with imprisonment, torture, and death. In this baptism of blood the African Church received her full share. Christians were thrown to the wild beasts, and burned as human torches. Church assemblies were deprived of their places of worship.

This persecution, raging in the reign of Septimius Severus, was most active at the height of Tertullian's career. Tertullian's *Apology* to the Roman rulers demanded a cessation of the persecutions of this martyr age, with equal rights and freedom of religion for Christians—the first plea for religious liberty as an inalienable right. Here again Tertullian's legal training was observable in its judicial style.

The principles of the gospel, of course, forbade vengeance here on earth on the part of Christians. But the vehement

⁶ Dr. Charles F. Hudson's masterful survey (*Debt and Grace*, p. 326) concurs: "He was the first, so far as we know, who expressly affirmed, and argued, that the torments of the lost would be co-eternal with the happiness of the saved."

spirit of Tertullian impelled him to regard the retribution of Hell for such, as endless and unmitigated in the world to come. Hell would be a hideous field of carnage, a "perpetual slaughter" (*aeterna occisio*). So Tertullian's fierce, vindictive spirit found solace in the contemplated eternal agonies of the lost. And within two centuries, under the powerful influence of Augustine, Tertullian's fantastic assertions came to be generally accepted.

4. INFLUENCED BY STOIC "PHILOSOPHY" WHILE REJECTING ITS "THEOSOPHY."—Tertullian was influenced by the principles of Stoic *philosophy* in its later form, as is seen in his theological slant, though he had no patience with Gnostic *theosophy*. And he was the first Christian writer in whom both Gnostic principles and Roman law appear together as determining elements. He held a *dualistic* concept of opposing principles—light and darkness, life and death, animate and inanimate, through all eternity—holding evil to be an eternal fact and a philosophic necessity, much like the Dualism of Manes of Persia.

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS DIVERSIFIED WRITINGS.—As to Tertullian's diversified writings, genius is stamped upon his works. In his *Apologeticus* (Defense of Christianity), about A.D. 197, addressed to the Roman officials, he maintains that Christians are good citizens, refusing divine honors to the emperor because they are monotheists. His polemical treatise, *De Praescriptione Haereticum* (Prescription Against Heretics), sets forth the Catholic principles of tradition and authority. Here he denies to all heretics the right to interpret Scripture. The Bible, he holds, is the possession of the church, to whom alone truth is handed down in succession from Christ and the apostles.⁷

His *De Anima* (A Treatise on the Soul) presents Tertullian's speculations on the origin, nature, and destiny of the

⁷ Bishop Bull observes that Tertullian's works, after he became a Montanist, were not in defense of Montanism as against the church, but rather in defense of the common doctrines of the church and of Montanism, in opposition to all other heretics. (Cited by Coxe, Introductory Note, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 240.)

human soul. He maintains a certain corporeity of the soul—without appeal to, and in conflict with, Holy Scripture, and sometimes clashing with Plato. And his work, *De Resurrectione Carne* (On the Resurrection of the Flesh, c. A.D. 208), intended as a confutation of the heresy that denied the resurrection of the body, maintains his theory of Immortal-Soulism and Endless Torment in all its baldness. These two works are vital to our quest.

Thus Tertullian's capitalization upon the Platonic dogma of universal Innate Immortality gave tremendous impetus to the horrific doctrine of punishment as "eternal life in hell." Tertullian, with his vivid imagination, became its great initial, third-century advocate. And despite his Montanist defection, and despite his strange hallucinations, he left a lasting immortality impress upon the church of all succeeding centuries. He pushed Immortal-Soulism forward with a power far surpassing Athenagoras, who spearheaded it.

6. STILL HELD TO MAJOR PROPHETIC OUTLINE.—Strangely enough, Tertullian remained a rather remarkable expositor of Bible prophecy, holding that Christ is the "stone" that is to smite the symbolic image (of Daniel 2) of the nations.⁸ The appearance of the Antichrist, or Beast, and Man of Sin, was, he held, drawing near. Rome's continuance delayed Antichrist's appearance,⁹ and "Babylon" symbolized Rome.¹⁰ Rome's breakup would be the signal for the terrors of the end,¹¹ with the millennium following the resurrection of the dead.¹² (For a comprehensive account of Tertullian's interpretation of the outline prophecies, see L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, volume 1, pages 256-260.)

And Tertullian still held to the two advents,¹³ with the resurrection at the Second Advent, not at death.¹⁴

⁸ Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 3, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 326.

⁹ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chap. 24, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 563.

¹⁰ Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, chap. 9, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 162.

¹¹ Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 32, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 42, 43.

¹² Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 3, chap. 35, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 342, 343.

¹³ Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 21, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 35.

¹⁴ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chap. 22, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 560, 561.

II. Threefold Basis of "Eternal Life in Hell" Postulate

The theory of "eternal life in hell" received maximum power and force under the weight and influence of Tertullian, unprecedented advocate of the underlying dogma of universal Innate Immortality. He now stood in the forefront as the outspoken champion of these twin dogmas. Let us now note the basis of his contentions.

1. THREE AXIOMS UNDERLYING ETERNAL-TORMENT POSTULATE.—Three great axioms or principles, undergirded Tertullian's entire teaching on future punishment. The first two were *philosophical dogmas*, without any pretense of support from Scripture. The third was *allegedly, but fallaciously, drawn from Scripture*. Specifically, these were: (1) The indefeasible immortality of all souls; (2) the presumptive distinction between "divine" and "common" fire in the punishment of the wicked; and (3) the devious turn given to such Bible terms as "destroy," "consume," "unquenchable." Let us now examine the *grounds* upon which they were based, the *arguments* used to support them, and the *conclusions* to which Tertullian was led. They are vital to his thesis.

2. INVOKES PLATO IN AFFIRMING IMMORTAL-SOULISM.—As to the first premise, Tertullian held as strongly as Plato to the inalienable immortality of the soul.

It is to be particularly noted that all Christian Fathers who use this "immortal soul" phrase or thought were not only familiar with but likewise in accord with this position in the writings of Plato. And it is also to be observed that none of such early Christian writers ever sought for support for this doctrine by primary appeal to Scripture, but had recourse instead to arguments similar to those used by Plato. Thus Tertullian invokes Plato by name, both for term and teaching. In two separate treatises Tertullian links his position inseparably to that of Plato, resting on him for support. Thus:

"Some things are known even by nature: the *immortality of the soul*,

for instance, is held by many; the knowledge of our God is possessed by all. I may use, therefore, the opinion of a Plato, when he declares, '*Every soul is immortal.*'"¹⁵

3. REJECTS PLATO'S PRE-EXISTENCE CONTENTION.—However, Tertullian as a Christian rejects Plato's pre-existence contention—that souls are unborn and uncreated, and thus have existed from all eternity. Instead, Tertullian holds that they were created "substances," having a beginning in time, thus again showing his familiarity with Plato's teachings, to which he alludes:

"For when we acknowledge that the soul originates in the breath of God, it follows that we attribute a beginning to it. This Plato, indeed, refuses to assign to it, for he will have the soul to be unborn and unmade."¹⁶

But Tertullian remains in firm agreement with Plato by name, on the main point, when he asserts further: "It is essential to a firm faith to declare with Plato that the soul is simple; in other words uniform and uncompounded."¹⁷

But having once been born or created, the soul thenceforth, he contends, possesses a life of which it cannot be deprived. Its continued existence is like that of God. So Plato's dogma, "*Every soul is immortal,*"¹⁸ became Tertullian's basic premise from which he never deviated. The "soul" could not die or cease to exist. Fallen or unfallen, righteous or wicked, redeemed or reprobate, it possessed an immortal life.

4. DEFINITIVE DECLARATION OF SOUL'S ORIGIN.—This Immortal-Soul postulate Tertullian sought to sustain, without knowledge of the Hebrew, from the Biblical account of the creation of man in Genesis 2:7, holding that immortality is expressed by man's becoming a "living soul." (He failed to note, however, that the expression was likewise applied to the lower creatures in Genesis 1:20, 21, which neutralized his argument.) But he relied on the expression "God . . . *breathed* into his nostrils

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 547. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁶ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 4, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 184.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 169.

¹⁸ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection*, chap. 3, quoted in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 547. (Italics supplied.)

the breath of life," drawing inconsistent deductions therefrom.

5. TERTULLIAN'S DEFINITION OF THE SOUL.—And now we come to Tertullian's amazingly definitive description of the soul:

"The soul, then, we define to be *sprung from the breath of God*, immortal, possessing body, having form, simple in its substance, intelligent in its own nature, developing its power in various ways, free in its determinations, subject to the changes of accident, in its faculties mutable [subject to change], rational, supreme, endowed with an instinct of presentiment, evolved out of one (archetypal) soul."¹⁹

This "breath of God" concept appears in *five* places, in as many chapters (3, 4, 7, 9, 11). It was not, therefore, an inadvertent use.

Tertullian thus assumed the soul to have been made, or created, out of some part of God—His breath—and hence immortal. Yet he immediately declares it subject to "changes of accident" and "in its faculties mutable." And in order to disagree with him, Tertullian cites Plato's amazingly elaborated philosophic opinion that "the soul is immortal, incorruptible, incorporeal, . . . invisible, incapable of delineation, uniform, supreme, rational, and intellectual." Little wonder that Tertullian immediately adds, "What more could he [Plato] attribute to the soul, if he wanted to call it God?"²⁰

6. CONGLOMERATION LEADS INTO HOPELESS PERPLEXITY.—Tertullian hastens to make this differentiation between the soul and God:

"We . . . who allow no appendage to God (in the sense of equality), by this very fact reckon the soul as very far below God; for we suppose it to be born, and hereby to possess something of a diluted Divinity, and an attenuated felicity, as the breath (of God), though not His spirit; and although immortal, as this is an attribute of divinity, yet for all that possible, since this is an incident of a born condition, and consequently from the first capable of deviation from perfection and right."²¹

In this *Treatise on the Soul* Tertullian not only contends

¹⁹ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 22, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 202. (Italics supplied.)

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 203.

²¹ *Ibid.*

that "the soul is the breath, or *afflatus* of God" (chaps. 3, 4, 11), but asserts its "*immortality*" (chaps. 2-4, 6, 9, 14; also 24, 38, 45, 51, 53, 54); illustrates its "*corporeity*" (chaps. 5-8); its "endowment with *form or figure*" (chap. 9); its "*simplicity in substance*" (chaps. 10, 11); and its "*inherent intelligence*" (chap. 12). Its "*rationality*," "*supremacy*," and "*instinctive divination*" are treated in his *De Anima*. Such is Tertullian's detailed concept of the soul.²²

This effort to combine human philosophy and divine truth led Tertullian into hopeless perplexity. His philosophic theology was but "emasculated Platonism," as Constable aptly calls it.²³ The soul is Godlike, but in its "mutability" it is like any other creature of time. Notwithstanding, man, Tertullian maintains, is possessed of an immortality akin to that of God, and in itself is part of the divine substance.²⁴

7. DREW SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT FROM MONTANIST "VISIONS."—But in addition to the two philosophical and the one "Biblical" argument for the soul's Innate Immortality, Tertullian claimed to have supernatural support in the form of personal revelations through the prophetic gift—"We too have merited the attainment of the prophetic gift." And he also produced the substantiating testimony of a second witness, a Montanist sister, "whose lot it has been to be favoured with sundry gifts of revelation," and who had seen "visions" of an immortal soul.²⁵

On the strength of these combined reasons and "revelations," Tertullian expounded the mystery of the characteristics and qualities of the soul, as a "corporeal substance."²⁶ And he attributed to it "form and limitation," together with that "triad of dimensions" ("length, and breadth, and height"), as well as "colour," "substance," "eyes," "ears," "a finger," "bosom," and "a tongue," and other members! But

²² *Ibid.*, p. 202, note 9.

²³ Constable, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

²⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 2, chap. 5, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 801.

²⁵ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 9, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 188.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

he still insisted that the possession of these does not militate against the soul's immortality. As to the "sister's" revelation Tertullian said:

"After the people are dismissed at the conclusion of the sacred services, she is in the regular habit of reporting to us whatever things she may have seen in vision. . . . 'Amongst other things,' says she, 'there has been shown to me a soul in bodily shape, and a spirit has been in the habit of appearing to me; not, however, a void and empty illusion, but such as would offer itself to be even grasped by the hand, soft and transparent and of an ethereal colour, and in form resembling that of a human being in every respect.' This was her vision, and for her witness there was God."²⁷

Amazing indeed!

Such was Tertullian's argument and belief on the "immortality of the soul," and the grounds thereof.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Tertullian Holds Wicked Ever Burn but Never Consume

I. Mystic Everlasting Fire That Never Consumes Victims

We have noted that there were two philosophical arguments that carried Tertullian on into this theory of Endless Torment for the wicked. The first we have already surveyed—that the wicked are in Hell but cannot die there because the *soul* is immortal. The second argument concerns the *body*, which the eternal fire of Hell cannot consume, for in the very act of burning it repairs and endlessly sustains what it consumes. Such is Tertullian's "fire of hell," in which the body will scorch in pain and agony through all eternity. Observe the course of argument.

1. NONCONSUMING FIRE CAUSES ENDLESS TORTURE.—In order to explain how the flames of Hell will sear the wicked perpetually, without ever devouring them, Tertullian has recourse to the *second* philosophical notion, likewise borrowed from paganism—that of a special form of fire, a "secret," or "divine," fire, that though it burns does not consume, but repairs, reproduces, and restores while it consumes. Thus his doctrine of eternal punishment is inseparably tied in with the pagan idea of *ignis sapiens*. Observe the setting of his statement. He first refers to the "immeasurable ages of eternity." And while the saints are, of course, saved forever throughout this eternity, the wicked are—

"consigned to the punishment of everlasting fire—that fire which, from its

very nature indeed, *directly ministers to their incorruptibility*.¹ The *philosophers* are familiar as well as we with the distinction between a common and a secret fire. Thus that which is in common use is far different from that which we see in divine judgments . . . for it does not consume what it scorches, but while it burns it repairs."²

Thus the "philosophers" are again invoked in this second philosophical argument, and this "secret fire," shared with them, is defined as being—

"the 'fire eternal!' a notable example of the endless judgment which still supplies punishment with fuel! . . . How will it be with the wicked and the enemies of God?"³

So this all stemmed from eternal fire and eternal destruction combined with the error that the soul is eternal and indestructible.

2. EXULTS OVER ETERNAL TORMENT OF PERSECUTORS.—The horrors of this Eternal Torment are vividly portrayed, and Tertullian's own satisfaction over their recompense is unabashedly set forth. In *De Spectaculis* (The Shows) Tertullian describes the "spectacle"—the "fast-approaching advent . . . the glory of the rising saints! . . . the kingdom of the just . . . that last day judgment with its everlasting issues . . . the world . . . consumed in one great flame."⁴ And now:

"How vast a spectacle then bursts upon the eye! What there excites my admiration? what my derision? Which sight gives me joy? which arouses me to exultation?—as I see so many illustrious monarchs, whose reception into the heavens was publicly announced, groaning now in the lowest darkness with great Jove [Jupiter or Zeus]⁵ himself, and those, too, who bore witness of their exultation; governors of provinces, too, who persecuted the Christian name, in fires more fierce than those with which in the days of their pride they raged against the followers of Christ. What world's wise men besides the very philosophers, in fact, who taught their followers that God had no concern in ought that is sublunary, and were wont to assure them that either they had no souls, or that they would never return to the bodies which at death they had left, now covered with shame before the poor deluded ones, as one fire consumes them!"⁶

¹ The question of the "incorruptibility" of the wicked will be noted separately. See pages 962, 963.

² Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 48, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 54.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Tertullian, *The Shows*, chap. 30, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 91.

⁵ Supreme deity of Greek and Roman mythology, lord of the heaven.

⁶ *Ibid.*

And to these he adds "poets," "tragedians," "actors," "the charioteer," "the wrestlers," "tossing in the fiery billows," "those whose fury vented itself against the Lord."

Charity demands that we remember Tertullian lived in an age of cruelty without pity, of heathen games, with blood gushing from the gladiator's wounds, and above all, an age of pitiless pagan persecution—with Christians cast to the wild beasts and burned as human torches. All this was reflected in Tertullian's stern concept of eternal life in Hell for such tormentors, as he exults over pagan persecutors now groaning in the hottest fires of Hell! Such was his cruel creed. Henry Constable made this searching comment back in 1886:

"The devouring flame supplies its inexhaustible fuel! Roaring, crackling, raging, scorching, paining, in the lurid vaults of hell, it supplies the bones, and marrow, and blood, and flesh, round which it roars, and crackles, and rages, with a noise as loud as the shrieks and wailings of the damned. Such was the philosophical theory which forced Tertullian to his view of future punishment. Men now laugh at the philosophical dogma. [But] they accept the diabolical conclusion which was based upon it!"⁷

One cannot read Tertullian's treatises and compare them with the earlier Christian writings without sensing the fact that it was Tertullian who gathered up the scattered ideas and gave force and prevalence to these new and revolutionary views—the Innate Immortality of all souls, now coupled with the Endless Torment of the wicked.

3. ETERNITY OF SIN INVOLVED IN MONSTROUS CONCEPT.—Tertullian's description of the eternal anguish of the damned surpassed any and all predecessors. He drew no veil of mercy over their agony. The pain of endless dying was brought out with terrible vividness. The cruelty of the age was clearly reflected in Tertullian's horrific postulate. And God was made the author of it all! Omnipotence was made to put forth His power to stay any mitigations and prevent any escape. Forever and ever! Millions and billions of years, and yet no nearer to its close. Endless cries, ceaseless groans, interminable despair.

⁷ Constable, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

That is but Manichaeian Dualism—the eternal principle of evil coexistent with the eternal principle of good. Such a monstrous concept turns the God of love into a fiendish torturer who would be eternally cursed by His innumerable victims. If that were true, then pity, horror, anguish, and revulsion would fill every celestial breast, since sin would be perpetuated forevermore.

II. Alters Basic Scripture Intent to Sustain "Torment" Theory

We have seen how the two *philosophical arguments*—the concept of the Innate Immortality of all souls and the figment of a divine, or secret, fire—were put forward by Tertullian to establish the postulate of the eternal punishing of the wicked. And this involved a terminology totally at variance with Scripture. But even more serious, in his *Biblical argument* the plain *intent* of the explicit declarations of Scripture pertaining to the doom of the lost was *systematically altered*, and sometimes reversed in meaning. And a turn was given that was not only foreign, but utterly opposed, to the intent of Holy Scripture.

This opened the way for scholars across the centuries to level against Tertullian the grave charge of manipulating Scripture to sustain his theory of the universal immortality of all souls and the Endless Torment of the eternally damned. As a consequence, he has often been accused of deliberately perverting the plain intent of Scripture ideology concerning life, death, and destiny, in order to justify his philosophical notions.

I. "INCORRUPTION" MISAPPLIED TO WICKED IN HELL.—For example, Tertullian speaks of the "incorruptibility" of the wicked,⁸ body and soul, in Hell, whereas Scripture confines both the term and the state of "incorruption" to the immortalized saints. "Incorruptibility" is primarily a Pauline term—

⁸ Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 48, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 54.

appearing five times, as concerns man, in First Corinthians:

(1) We *strive* for an "incorruptible" crown (1 Cor. 9:25).

(2) The corruptible bodies of the saints are *to be raised* in "incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:42).

(3) Corruption *does not inherit* "incorruption" (v. 50).

(4) "This corruptible *must put on* incorruption," when we are immortalized (v. 53).

(5) When "incorruption" *shall have been put on*, death is swallowed up (v. 54).

The term is also applied by Paul to the "*incorruptible God*" (Rom. 1:23), "*who only* hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16).

Peter also writes of an "inheritance incorruptible" that is *reserved* for us (1 Peter 1:4). It is connected with the "resurrection" (v. 3).

It is to be revealed in the "last time" (v. 5).

And it is only for those "*born again*" of "incorruptible" seed (v. 23).

2. "IMMORTALITY" WRONGLY APPLIED TO WICKED.—Further, in his works on the *Soul* and the *Resurrection*, Tertullian repeatedly speaks of the natural immortality of the incorrigibly wicked as verily as of the resurrection of the righteous, whereas Scripture says that God "*only* hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16), and that the saints must "*put on*" immortality at the resurrection and the Second Advent (1 Cor. 15:53). And Tertullian fantastically asserts that man was made of the breath of the immortal God, and refers to the soul as having a divine nature and an eternal substance*—a concept and a phrasing likewise totally at variance with the repeated declarations of Holy Writ. God, on the contrary, dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16). He alone is the "King eternal, immortal" (1 Tim. 1:17).

Such were two of the frequent twists and turns employed.

* See page 956.

3. "DESTRUCTION'S" PLAIN INTENT SET ASIDE.—Again, the most common *scriptural* description of the punishment of the wicked is that they will be "destroyed," or suffer "destruction" in Hell, or Gehenna. Tertullian, thoroughly understanding Greek, well knew that "destruction" meant the annihilation, end, or cessation of the organized being. This is clear from various allusions. One was to Epicurus' dual use of the term to convey the concept of utter cessation of existence at death.¹⁰ In another place Tertullian states that "destruction" differs altogether from *change*, for to be changed is merely "to exist in another condition."

"To perish," he said, "is *altogether to cease to be what a thing once was*,"¹¹ to cease to have existence, to be identical with the annihilation of any substance. Elsewhere, he tells us that the condition of the body in the grave, when it has seen corruption, is that of destruction; and that if God were to leave the body forever in this condition it would be His "*abandoning it to everlasting destruction*." So he clearly understood the terms in their ordinary usage. His turn on "destruction" will be noted next.

4. "IMMORTAL SOULS" CANNOT PERISH IN HELL.—In chapter thirty-four, on the resurrection, commenting on Christ's coming "*to seek and to save that which is lost*," Tertullian asks, "What do you suppose that to be which is lost?" The answer is, "The whole man, of course," in "both his natures"—body and soul. But then he says naively: "We, however, so understand the *soul's immortality* as to believe it 'lost,' not in the sense of destruction, but of punishment, that is, in hell." And he continues, "If this is the case, then it is not the soul which salvation will affect, since it is 'safe' already *in its own nature by reason of its immortality*, but rather the flesh," which is "subject to destruction."

Then he adds: "*If the soul is also perishable*," and "not

¹⁰ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 42, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 221.

¹¹ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection*, chap. 55, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 588.

immortal," the Lord would purpose to "save" it.¹² And he again refers to the "two substances," of body and soul, and asserts that "the Lord purposes to save that part of him which perishes [the body], whilst he will not of course lose that portion [the soul] which cannot be lost."¹³ But these hazy statements become clearer as we continue.

5. "BODY" DESTINED FOR "ETERNAL KILLING" IN HELL.—

Then in chapter thirty-five Tertullian turns to Christ's warning in Matthew 10:28—"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." Tertullian very properly equates the "kill" in the first clause with "destroy" in the second.

He also recognizes that God is able to do what He declares He will do with the wicked in Hell. But he immediately adds, "Here, then, we have a recognition of the *natural immortality of the soul*, which cannot be killed by *men*; and of the mortality of the body, which may be killed." He observes that "the resurrection of the dead is a resurrection of the *flesh*; for unless it were raised again, it would be impossible for the *flesh* to be 'killed in hell.'" ¹⁴

Tertullian again speaks of "both substances" (body and soul), as he conceived them, and the distinction to be made between them, for it is the "*flesh*" which will be "destroyed in hell." Then he adds, "So also will it [the body] be restored to life eternal"¹⁵—but meaning *eternal life in torment*, as will become clear. And now follows this remarkable passage denying the literal destruction of body or soul in Hell:

"If, therefore, any one shall violently suppose that the destruction of the soul and the flesh in hell amounts to a final annihilation of the two substances, and not to their penal treatment (as if they were to be consumed, not punished), let him recollect that the *fire of hell is eternal*—expressly announced as an *everlasting penalty*; and let him then admit that it is from this circumstance that this *never-ending 'killing'* is more for-

¹² *Ibid.*, chap. 34, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 569. (Italics supplied.)

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 570.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 35, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 570. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

midable than a merely human murder, which is only temporal. He will then come to the conclusion that substances [of both body and soul] must be eternal, when *their penal 'killing' is an eternal one.*"¹⁶

There is no cessation of being, he declares, no end, no annihilation of the body and soul of the wicked.

6. RESURRECTION OF FLESH IS FOR "ETERNAL KILLING."—Tertullian then continues his argument:

"Since, then, the body after the resurrection has to be killed by God in hell along with the soul, we surely have sufficient information in this fact respecting both the issues *which await it*, namely the resurrection of the flesh, and its eternal 'killing.' Else it would be most absurd if the flesh should be raised up and destined to 'the killing in hell,' in order to be put an end to, when it might suffer such an annihilation (more directly) if not raised again at all."¹⁷

7. PERVERTS MEANING OF "DEATH" AND "DYING."—Tertullian knew and acknowledged that certain words used in Scripture to express future punishment properly have a certain consistent meaning. But this theory of Eternal Torment of the wicked did not permit these words to be used in their true, normal, and proper sense. Consequently, they had to be given an improper and unnatural turn in order to sustain his view. But surely any theory that requires such violence to be done to the language of Scripture is *manifestly unscriptural*.

Nevertheless, such was Tertullian's philosophy, and such was his consequent practice. For example, Tertullian warps the meaning of "death" and "dying" into being a change of *life*, for the worse of course. Note his definition of "dead":

"The word *dead* expresses simply what has lost the vital principle [*animam*], by means of which it used to live. Now the body is that which loses life, and as the result of losing it becomes dead. To the *body*, therefore, the term dead is only suitable. Moreover, as resurrection accrues to what is dead, and dead is a term applicable only to a body, therefore the body alone has a resurrection incidental to it."¹⁸

Thus Tertullian held that the terms "to die," "to be

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 570, 571. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 571.

¹⁸ Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 5, chap. 9, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 447.

destroyed," and "death"—all synonymous to him—were not "suitable" to apply to the *soul*, and could properly be affirmed only of the body *after death and until resurrection*.

8. FORCED TO GIVE IMPROPER TURN TO TERMINOLOGY.—Tertullian was thus in a strait betwixt his correct knowledge of the true meaning of the words of Scripture and his revolutionary theory of future punishment. These words, which he could not (according to his theory) apply to the soul *at any time*, but could apply to the risen bodies of the wicked *only after the resurrection*, were nevertheless applied to both body and soul of the wicked.

What therefore to do? He could not remove them from Scripture. And he could not deny the fact that God *could* destroy both body and soul in Hell. Furthermore, he could not deny that the only "suitable" sense of those words demands that body and soul would be annihilated, and ultimately cease to be or exist. So, rather than yield his theory, he put a forced, improper, and "*unsuitable*" sense upon the words of Scripture!

This he did, for example, with Matthew 10:28 ("destroy both soul and body in hell") in denying that the wicked would ever cease to exist in Hell. Denying the contention of the "final annihilation of the two substances" (body and soul) "as if they were to be consumed," in contrast with being "punished," Tertullian stresses that "the fire of hell is eternal," and is "an everlasting penalty," and is therefore a "never-ending killing." "

His reasoning was simply this: The loss of existence by one who might have had existence forever is no punishment! Tertullian differentiated "destruction" from "punishment," holding that destruction is *not* "punishment." He maintains that "being killed," "being destroyed," and "being consumed," is no punishment. He phrases it, "As if they were to be consumed, not punished." So, to Tertullian, consuming, or being

¹⁹ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection*, chap. 35, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 570.

deprived of an eternal existence, was not punishment. Thus he was impelled to distort the intent of Scripture.

9. EMPLOYS DEVIOS ARTIFICE OF DISTORTION.—In chapter nineteen, *On the Resurrection*, Tertullian severely castigates the artifice of “heretics” in perverting the “true meaning of the important words” of Scripture by recourse to “figurative and allegorical language.” Thus they distort “the most clearly described doctrine of the resurrection” into “some imaginary sense.” He specifies their giving to “death” a purely “*spiritual sense*.” “They say that that which is commonly supposed to be death is not really so . . . : it is rather the ignorance of God.” That is “held to be the resurrection” when a man is reanimated by access to the truth, and “having dispersed the death of ignorance, . . . has burst forth from the sepulchre of the old man.”²⁰ The propriety and scope of his censures is crystal clear.

It therefore seems amazingly strange that Tertullian’s astute mind should permit him to censure the artifice of “heretics,” and yet turn about and himself employ the same devious device of rendering “death” as “endless *misery*,” and “destruction” and “consuming” as eternal “*pain and anguish*.” Thus Tertullian’s contorted treatment of the language of Scripture led him into an interminable maze of confusion and contradiction, as we have seen.

But this much is very clear: The source of Tertullian’s new terminology is to be found in his revolutionary theory of human destiny. And his devious treatment of the terminology of Scripture is the obvious condemnation of the system. That is the inescapable indictment of Tertullianism.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 558, 559.

Universal Restoration Substituted for Eternal Torment

Third School Now Completes Theological Trilemma— Origen Replaces Endless Torment With Universalism

Alexandria was not only the seat of a famous Catechetical School but a gathering place for numerous groups of philosophers, Gnostics, Christians, and heretics of all sorts. Especially was it the rallying point for Platonic philosophy, or more accurately of Neoplatonism. From here and from other North African centers such as Carthage and Hippo the blight of Platonism continued to obscure the light of the gospel more and more, until at last, after a few centuries, the church was encompassed by the midnight of the Dark Ages. The evidence is overwhelming that from the third century onward Christianity was increasingly perverted by the penetrations of Neoplatonic philosophy.

1. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL.—Prior to Origen, Christian writers had fully and freely discussed and defended individual doctrines. But this was usually because of attacks made upon them by heretics. None had previously attempted a systematic exposition of the Christian faith as a whole. Now, however, such a bold scheme got under way at Alexandria around the close of the second century. And as Alexandria was the primal seat of speculative philosophy, it was but natural that Alexandrian Christianity should assume a speculative form.



Origen of Alexandria—Projector of New Universal-Restoration Theory, Countering Tertullian's Eternal-Torment Concept.

Clement of Alexandria—First a Conditionalist; Then Switches to Bald Immortal-Soulism.



The Alexandrian Christians were Platonists, and sought to explain Christianity according to Platonic categories, just as two centuries prior, in that same city, Philo had similarly attempted to explain Judaism in the Platonic framework. In fact, these Christian Platonists were definitely indebted to Philo, as well as to Plato. But that was not all. While most of the other Christian writers of the time still held to the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments in their most obvious meaning and form, the Alexandrians came to pay little heed to the historico-literal sense in interpretation. The allegorical method of exegesis was reduced to a system.

And significantly enough, the chief speculations of this group turned to the Godhead, the problem of evil, and the origin, nature, will, and destiny of man, and the related consummation of all things—the subject of our survey. Thus it was that Alexandria became the spawning ground of many a far-reaching and subversive development.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL.—The new Alexandrian School emphasis was eclectic in principle. Certain philosophers had devised the plan of gleaning the "good" from the various systems of philosophy—Egyptian, Oriental, Pythagorean, Platonic, and now the dynamic Christian faith. But Platonism formed the integrating bond, and the postulate of the Innate Immortality of the soul assumed a central place. Ammonius Saccas gave new life to this coalition of opinions, and the virility of the new Christianity gave it new impetus. So it was that Neoplatonism gradually crowded all other contenders into the background, and like the rising sun began to eclipse every lesser light.

Moreover, it had wide appeal, both to Christian and to pagan, for the transition in emphasis was easy. But it became the nursery school of error, for Plato's doctrine of Innate Immortality was now incorporated as one of the main planks in its platform. In fact, Immortal-Soulism became the cornerstone of the new system, and men were urged to free the immortal spirit from all encumbering influences. Even the perplexing restoration, or resurrection of the dead, was so interpreted as to accommodate it to the tenets of the Greek sages.

3. HOUR OF PERIL FOR EXPANDING CHURCH.—And now we turn to the second great hour of peril for the rapidly expanding church. It had reached another determinative fork in the road, as had previously confronted it when Tertullianism arose. And from this new turning point onward a major segment of the church began to veer farther and farther away from her original primitive position and course. The finger boards at this new fork had been turned at a divergent angle by the Platonic philosophers, and now pointed down the tangent road of departure. As a consequence there were progressive digressions during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, stemming from the aggressive teachings and illustrious names of Tertullian, Origen, and finally Augustine.

In the departure from, and actual abandonment of, the

apostolic principles of historical and literal Biblical interpretation, Origen now led the way with a new boldness—breaking away from the older accepted landmark principles of Biblical exegesis. He was, in fact, the first to reduce the allegorical method of interpretation to a definite system, like that of Philo for the Jews.

His aim was to harmonize the Scriptures with the Platonic modes of thought, which had become the essence of his own thinking. In this he exerted a profound influence, for from his day until the time of Chrysostom (d. 407) there was scarcely a commentator who did not borrow heavily from his words,¹ and pattern his method of exegesis more or less after Origen's revolutionary Allegorical School of Interpretation.

4. GRAVE INVOLVEMENTS OF ORIGENISM.—It may therefore be fairly said that, perhaps more than any other single individual of that era, Origen—scholar, philosopher, Immortal-Soulist, and *allegorizer*—set in motion those diverting forces that ultimately crowded the Advent hope and expectancy into the background. Prior to Origen, church leaders had looked for the triumph of righteousness to be brought about through the supernatural interposition of Christ at His second advent, and the concurrent literal resurrection of the righteous dead. And these were tied in with the cataclysmic end of the world, which was expected by many within a fairly short time—at most by A.D. 500.

But Origen now introduced his theory of the ultimate establishment of Christianity in this present world by gradual growth, and throughout the universe by the ultimate universal restoration of all the wicked. However, in order to establish his postulate Biblically, he was compelled to *spiritualize* the resurrection, to *mysticize* and *neutralize* the Second Advent, as well as to *allegorize* the prophecies concerning the last things.

¹ Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 321.

He thus struck at the very heart of the primitive Christian hope, substituting therefore a radically new type of Christianity, and implanting a new concept of the relationship between God, man, and sin, and of the destiny of the race. It was a fateful day for the church, fraught with far-reaching consequences.

5. ROSEATE EXPECTATIONS, BUT GROSS PERVERSIONS.—Origen's speculative scheme for resolving the moral problems of life, death, and destiny, consistent as he thought with divine love and justice, was his revolutionary theory of universal restoration. It was a new and enticing concept. Salmond calls it "the dreamland, the enchanted land of theology."² Another refers to it as "the cloudland looming with rose-tinted peaks in the far *aionian* future."³ It was all that, and more. It involved a radically new eschatology.

But it was all curiously shot through with the notion of the pre-existence and transmigration of souls, the baptism of purifying fire in the other world, the ministry of spirits in the afterlife, and the persistence of something in every life superior to evil, leading at last to the triumph of righteousness for all. It was a roseate picture, appealing to the natural heart of man. But even according to Origen this was not an absolute restoration, but one that might, alas, be followed by new falls and new restorations. So, quite apart from its antiscriptural basis, it was not without its drawbacks, reservations, and uncertainties.

And not all, by any means, followed Origen's philosophical and theological speculations. In fact, their projection caused grave concern to a large and powerful group, and resulted in open opposition. As a consequence, the Christian Church, as concerns the nature and eternal destiny of man, became divided into three major groups, each battling the other vigorously. Irenaeus had taught the *final annihilation*

² S. D. F. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 630.

³ Quoted in Salmond, *loc. cit.*

of the wicked, Tertullian their *eternal torment*, and now Origen their *ultimate restoration*.

The tension of the contending forces mounted. Gradually, however, the Tertullian-Augustinian position of *Eternal Torment* gained the ascendancy, and the other two views (eternal death and ultimate restoration for the wicked) were relegated to the background. Note the progressive steps of accomplishment in broad outline.

6. THE PROGRESSIVE PATH OF DEPARTURE.—Origen followed the tangent path of departure through to its ultimate. His *third-century* spiritualization of the resurrection and the Second Advent—blended with his allegorization of the rest of Scripture—coupled with the postulate of the indefeasible immortality of the soul, together constituted the first fatal step in the great departure from the earlier Christian faith.

The second step followed in the *fourth century* under Eusebius, likewise an Immortal-Soulist, who conceived the newly elevated Christian Church, now under imperial preferment, protection, and patronage, to be the prophesied "kingdom of God."⁴ Thus he carnalized, or materialized, the kingdom aspect of Early Church expectation.

The third step, constituting the climax of the progressive departure, came under Augustine's *fifth-century* contention (along with retention of the previous two) that the predicted thousand-year binding of Satan had already begun with the First Advent. Augustine maintained that they were, in fact, already living in the millennial period.⁵ And all three men—Origen, Eusebius, and Augustine—held, of course, to the basic Neoplatonic postulate of universal Innate Immortality.

And now, under Augustine's powerful influence this elaborated thesis became virtually universal. By this time the early simple Christian faith was so mangled and overwhelmed that it was scarcely recognizable, and remained under a virtual

⁴ Constantine's public espousal of Christianity introduced within a single generation the most remarkable revolution in the thoughts, laws, and customs of an empire recorded in history, and thus afforded a plausible basis for the revolutionary "kingdom" concept, when not checked with Scripture.

⁵ For a full portrayal see L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 1, chaps. 14-20.

blackout for more than a thousand years. Not until Reformation times and influences did it emerge from the long eclipse, as the light of the gospel dispelled the darkness of departure.

7. PLATONIC INFLUENCE SUPERSEDES THAT OF APOSTLES.—The influence of Plato was now definitely impressed upon the thought and language of all who followed either Tertullian or Origen, especially on those of philosophic background. Upon some it had profound effect. But both groups followed Plato implicitly in asserting that “*every soul is immortal.*” Indeed, this proposition became the common bond of unity between these two conflicting schools of theological thought as to the *destiny* of the soul.⁸

On this point of Innate Immortality Plato was now definitely placed above the prophets and apostles, and accorded a deference and an authority greater and wider than he had ever contemplated. In fact, Plato was actually dominating the church under the guise of the authority of Christ, and often in opposition to, and subversive of, the explicit doctrines of the apostles.

Particularly in Alexandria, through Origen, were these new, unnatural, and far-fetched meanings read into the language of both the Old and New Testaments through mysticizing, allegorizing, and spiritualizing away their natural sense. The nature and destiny of man was now definitely Platonized. Thus it was that the teachings of Plato came to be palmed off on the church under the sanction of Scripture. But even more tragic, the actually uncertain and merely tentative suggestions of Plato on the soul were now boldly taught by the schools of Tertullian and Origen as established truth in the realm of the soul.

8. BALEFUL EFFECTS OF ACCEPTING PLATONISM.—The baleful effects of accepting the Platonic thesis of the immortality of the soul soon began to appear. The body came to be

⁸ “Tertullian and Origen, whose views differed on other subjects, agreed in this one point, that they, in accordance with their peculiar notions concerning the nature of the soul, looked upon its immortality as essential to it.”—Hagenbach, *Compendium of the History of Doctrines*, vol. 1, p. 163.

despised and held in contempt. It was consequently disciplined and weakened, in order that the "spark of divinity" in the immortal spirit might be exalted and freed. And as the "immortal soul" was considered imprisoned and debased by the body, its corporeal habitation, so it was held that in proportion to disengagement from this encumbrance would the soul be prepared for its restoration to purity. Thus asceticism and devotion to a life of seclusion and solitude followed, accompanied by the upspringing of monasteries, abbeys, hermits, and anchorites.

Celibacy likewise developed out of the same rootage. And this, in turn, was followed by the worship of saints and relics, and the concept of patron saints and the intercession of saints, inasmuch as after death the saints were believed to be more active and powerful than before, now having free access to Heaven and to God. Purgatory was introduced to mitigate the terrors of the Eternal Torment of Tertullianism. The soul was held to be part of the divine nature but confined to the body. And the sins that clung to it must be purged away, and the soul purified from sin.

Such were the blighting effects resulting from the introduction of Platonism into the precincts of the church. So we say that beyond controversy Origen's innovations were largely instrumental in accelerating the early great apostasy of the church. To these we now turn. His doctrine of the progressive final triumph of the church on earth, which undermined the Biblical doctrine of the kingdom of God, and his ridicule of Chiliasm, all paved the way for the later Augustinian concepts of the millennium as embracing the Christian Era, and the earthly church as constituting God's promised kingdom, and the soul as innately immortal. These, in turn, gave rise to the full-blown Catholic system of the Middle Ages.

9. ORIGENISM BANNED UNDER JUSTINIAN.—Although Origenism never became general, it had numerous adherents, especially in the East, including Gregory Thaumaturgus, Pamphilus, Titus of Bostia, Basil, Diodorus, Didymus, and

Gregory of Nyssa. But there were opponents—Cyprian, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Jerome. But in the age of Justinian free inquiry was proscribed, and all such questions came to be settled by authority. The keys of Heaven and Hell were by now in the hands of the hierarchy, through the exclusive privilege of the priesthood to administer the sacraments, and thus admit or exclude souls from the church and Heaven.

In 544, at an imperial synod of bishops, held at Constantinople, Origen's name appears in the list of those condemned and anathematized as heretical. Thus Origenism, in the sixth century—in the sense of Universal Restorationism—came to be treated as a heresy, as Augustinianism rose to dominance. It was suppressed by the church for a thousand years. It did not, in fact, reappear until post-Reformation times, and then in modified form.⁷ But the allegorical principle of exegesis persisted, and was widely employed—and still is by many to this day.

⁷ Under Petersen, Bengel, Oetinger, and Michael Hahn in Germany, Newton in England, and Lavater of Zurich, et cetera.

Rise and Spread of Neoplatonic Restorationism

I. Clement of Alexandria—Reverses Position in Transition Hour

Let us now search into the beginnings of Restorationism. By the close of the second century the church had spread from Britain to the Ganges. It was flourishing in Gaul and in other regions of the West, and had established itself firmly in the Delta of the Nile. At Alexandria the Catechetical School had gathered a group of intellectuals, both teachers and students, somewhat on the order of a Christian university.

We are now in that transition hour in the expanding church, when some begin to change over from their former Conditionalist views to the developing Innate-Immortality concept that was creeping in as a result of attempting to syncretize the Christian faith with Platonic philosophy. And this development had, as noted, its focal point chiefly in Alexandria and its famous school.

One of the first to shift his views in this way was CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (*c.* 150-*c.* 220), brilliant contemporary of Irenaeus of Gaul, the noted Conditionalist. He was born of non-Christian parents, probably in Athens or Alexandria. On becoming a Christian, Clement traveled widely in Greece, Italy, Palestine, Egypt, and the East, seeking truth at the feet of masters of thought representing sundry religious and philosophical views. (For chronological placement see Chart F, page 758.)

Returning to Egypt, Clement felt that under Pantaenus,

devout Gnostic head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria, he found what he had been searching for. Clement was already deeply versed in pagan Greek philosophy and literature when he came in touch with philosophical Christianity under Pantaenus. Accepting this form of Christianity, he was ordained a presbyter. Then he succeeded Pantaenus as head of the school about A.D. 190. He continued as such until A.D. 202, when he was driven from his post by persecution under Septimius Severus, and fled to Palestine and Asia Minor. And he was in turn succeeded by his brilliant pupil Origen.

Clement agreed with the Gnostics in making *gnōsis* (religious knowledge or illumination) the chief element in Christian perfection. At the same time he sought to supplement Christianity with Greek philosophy, which he regarded as likewise a divine gift to mankind. But he still held that true *gnōsis* presupposes the apostolic faith and divine revelation as its core. To him, Christ became man in order to give a supreme revelation, and in order "that through Him men might partake of immortality."¹

Clement made no formal statement like Justin Martyr, no elaborate exposition of principle like Irenaeus, no strict argument like Athenagoras. But all the way through his earlier writings he taught immortality in the sense of endless existence for the *saved*. In these initial treatises he held that immortality is not the common property of humanity. It is the special addition of something distinct from one's self, or nature. There is nothing eternal, he maintained, except what God gives. And contrariwise, there is no getting of what is eternal, and no continuance of any, but only death to the disobedient.

1. DEVELOPS INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHIC CHRISTIANITY.—Clement was considered one of the most accomplished Christian scholars prior to Origen. He had mastered Greek, as well as Gnostic and Christian literature, and was an ele-

¹ *ODCC*, art., "Clement of Alexandria," p. 300.

gant writer in Greek. He wrote the treatises upon which his fame rests while teaching in Alexandria. Profoundly speculative, he sought "the true, the beautiful, and the good" wherever they were to be found, seeking to blend them into a harmonious "Christian" system. So the noble is sometimes intermingled with the fantastic and the puerile.

As noted, it was in Alexandria that the influence of Greek philosophy upon Christianity reached its height, tinged with a fatal blend of Gnostic elements. According to Harnack, Clement's impress was epoch making. He increasingly introduced Stoic, Platonic, and Philonic ingredients not in harmony with Christianity but which in time gained the ascendancy. His chosen objective was to develop a suitable introduction to philosophic Christianity to appeal to the intelligentsia. He even came to regard ignorance and error as more evil than sin, and developed an "optimistic view of the ultimate destiny of even the most erring."² In other words, in his last great work he planted the seed thought of ultimate Restorationism that bore such baleful fruit under Origen.

2. MEETING POINT OF TWO CONVERGING LINES.—Clement's three greatest works, forming a trilogy, are *Exhortation to the Heathen* (the *Protrepticus*), *The Instructor* (or *Paedagogus*), and the *Miscellanies* (or *Stromata*). This latter work was filled with a vast number of quotations from authors of all kinds and from all countries, and could only have been composed near an extensive library such as that of Alexandria.

There also his *Outlines of Scripture Interpretation* (or *Hypotyposes*) was brought forth. This constituted the boldest literary undertaking in the history of the Early Church. It sought to put Christianity into the form of profane world literature. In Clement's view the gospel is not so much a new departure as the meeting point of two converging lines of progress—Hellenism and Judaism. To Clement, history is one because "truth is one."

² *Ibid.*

His *Exhortation to the Heathen* (c. 194) was a defense of Christian truth designed to prove the superiority of Christianity and to win the pagan to the philosophic gospel. It contains a withering exposure of pagan abominations. The *Instructor*, as its name indicates, was to guide new converts in daily living. The later *Miscellanies* dealt with the various points of Christian theology. Its full title is significant—"Titus Flavius Clement's Miscellaneous Collections of Speculative (Gnostic) Notes Bearing on the True Philosophy." The *Outlines* are comments on the Old and New Testaments. And among his numerous lost works, of which "we have no trace," other than reference by Clement himself, were two, *On the Soul* and *On the Resurrection*.³ It is regrettable that these are not available.

3. SWINGS TO IMMORTAL-SOULISM IN LATEST TREATISE.—To Clement, God the Father is the "Remoter Cause," whereas the Son embodies the timeless and unoriginated Principle of Existence, and was the agent in creating and governing the universe. Clement stressed man's free will. But to him the temptation and Fall were but allegory, yet with Christ coming to deliver man from sin and death. Tertullian, of Carthage, with his asceticism and repression of human nature, was the very opposite of Clement of Alexandria, with his humanitarianism for attaining exaltation of character.

It is to be particularly noted that in his earlier writings Clement did not speak of the soul as immortal. That was still a Gnostic and Platonic expression not yet held or employed by Christians. But by the time of his later and major treatise he had definitely switched over to Immortal-Soulism, as will be seen in section V, page 991.

Although he held that true Christian knowledge is derived principally from Scripture, he believed it was also received from Plato and from Hellenic philosophy. Philosophy, he maintained, was the divinely ordained preparation of the

³ "Introductory Note to Clement of Alexandria," in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 169.

Greeks for faith in Christ, just as the law had been for the Hebrews. Hence Clement contended for the value of Greek literature and philosophic culture against those who regarded such learning as useless and dangerous. He proclaimed himself an eclectic,⁴ believing in the existence of fragments of truth in all systems, but which must be separated from error. However, Clement still held theoretically that truth in its greatest purity and completeness is found supremely in Christ. Such is the highly complex setting of Clement's witness.

II. Earlier Declarations Couched in Conditionalist Terms

1. IMMORTALITY A REWARD TO BE RECEIVED.—Clement's clearest and most direct earlier statements on the nature and destiny of man appear in the unique *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?*—a practical treatise, showing that "the disposition of the soul is the great essential." It was one of his earlier works, and comprises forty-two sections. Its precise date is not known, but at the very outset Clement speaks of gaining "the prize of everlasting life,"⁵ as Christ sets before the rich young ruler "the way to the life to come."

Comparing the course of life to "the case with athletes," to use common things to illustrate the "great and immortal," he shows how the one deprived of attaining has failed to submit to the discipline and training required, and thus has "remained uncrowned." So Christ counsels the wealthy, "Nor let him, on the other hand, expect to grasp the crowns of immortality without struggle and effort." Rather, let him put himself "under the Word as his trainer." Then, when the last trumpet shall sound, he may "present himself victorious before the Judge who confers the rewards," amid the "acclamations of angels."⁶

2. "TRUE" AND "SURE" IMMORTALITY IS "GIFT OF ETER-

⁴ Clement, *The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, book 1, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 308.

⁵ Clement, *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* secs. 1 and 2, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 591; cf. p. 169, Introductory Note.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 3, pp. 592, 593. (Italics supplied.)

NAL LIFE."—In section six, the ruler's question propounded to Christ is rehearsed, pertaining to "the Truth respecting the true immortality," the "Perfect respecting the *perfect* rest," and the "Immortal respecting the *sure* immortality," in obvious contrast with false and phantom immortality. The providing of the "true" necessitated Christ's incarnation among men—the "essence of the gospel"—which is none other than the "*gift* of eternal life." These are Clement's exact words regarding this supreme question:

"The Life respecting life, the Saviour respecting salvation, the Teacher respecting the chief doctrines taught, the Truth respecting the *true immortality*, the Word respecting the word of the Father, the Perfect respecting the perfect rest, the Immortal respecting the *sure immortality*. He was asked respecting those things on account of which He descended, which He inculcates, which He teaches, which He offers, in order to show the essence of the Gospel, that it is *the gift of eternal life*."⁷

To proffer life and immortality, then, was the supreme purpose of Christ's coming. And Clement adds that God is the "first and only dispenser of eternal life," which is given to us through the Son.⁸

3. GOD IS GIVER OF EVERYTHING ETERNAL; OTHERWISE DEATH.—Clement's declaration is unequivocal: God is the "giver of what is eternal," for both "being" and "non-being"⁹ are derived from Him. Without Him there is only "death," while in and with Him is the "only life." Here is his further statement:

"To know the eternal God, *the giver of what is eternal*, and by knowledge and comprehension to possess God, who is first, and highest, and one, and good. For this is the immutable and immovable source and support of life, the knowledge of God, who really is, and who bestows the things which really are, that is those which are eternal, from whom both being and the continuance [or "non-being"] of it are derived to other beings. For ignorance of Him is death; but the knowledge and appropriation of Him, and love and likeness to Him, are the only life."¹⁰

4. IMMORTALITY CAME NOT THROUGH LAW, BUT THROUGH CHRIST.—Stressing that the law came through

⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 6, p. 593. (Italics supplied.)

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, sec. 7, p. 593, note 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

Moses, while grace and truth came through Christ, Clement declared that the law did not "confer" immortality, otherwise one would not need to seek from Christ for what would be "another immortality." Thus:

"The gifts granted through a faithful servant ["Moses"] are not equal to those bestowed by the true Son. If then the law of Moses had been sufficient to confer eternal life, it were to no purpose for the Saviour Himself to come and suffer for us, accomplishing the course of human life from His birth to His cross; and to no purpose for him who had done all the commandments of the law from his youth to fall on his knees and beg from another immortality."¹¹

Immortality is therefore not man's innate possession.

5. TURNED AWAY FROM SOLE SOURCE OF LIFE.—"Self-determination" is the privilege of the soul, states Clement, and "choice" depends on a man's "being free." But the "gift" remains in the hand of God. We must ask, then we will acquire.¹² In the case of the rich young ruler Christ sets before His inquirer the "one thing which was especially required by the Saviour, so as to receive the eternal life which he desired." But the young ruler turned away from the offer. He "did not truly wish life" and "the grace of Him who offered everlasting life."¹³ Only those who know "God and God's righteousness" will be the "possessors of everlasting life."¹⁴

6. DESTRUCTION IS PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE.—Clement then adds a warning concerning destruction: "But he who uses the body given to him chastely and according to God, shall live; and he that destroys the temple of God shall be destroyed."¹⁵

He then turns from anything deemed "inherent in your soul" to those things which "minister everlasting life," and gives this assurance to those who respond to the provisions of God: "There shall *accrue* to you endless reward and honour, and salvation, and *everlasting immortality*."¹⁶

¹¹ *Ibid.*, sec. 8, p. 593.

¹² *Ibid.*, sec. 10, p. 593.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 594.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 11, p. 594.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, sec. 18, p. 596.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 19, p. 596. (*Italics supplied.*)

Thus he distinguishes between immortality and the virtues of which it is the crown and reward.

7. IMMORTALITY SET OVER AGAINST DESTRUCTION.—Setting forth the adequacy of Christ as satisfying “bread,” and that He is able to supply “the drink of immortality,” Clement brings in the contrast with inexorable death:

“I am He who feeds thee, giving Myself as bread, of which he who has tasted experiences death no more, and supplying day by day *the drink of immortality*. I am teacher of supercelestial lessons. For thee I contended with Death, and paid thy death, which thou owedst for thy former sins and thy unbelief towards God.”¹⁷

Then he admonishes:

“Better is the kingdom of God to a man with one eye, than the fire to one who is un mutilated. Whether hand, or foot, or soul, hate it. For if it is destroyed here for Christ’s sake, it will be *restored to life yonder*.”¹⁸

And he adds that wealth may become the “author and patron of death.”¹⁹

8. EVERLASTING HABITATIONS; IMMORTALITY; ETERNAL MANSIONS.—Then, in section thirty-two, Clement exalts the superiority of the exchange—“everlasting habitations,” “immortality,” and an “eternal mansion in the heavens.” And finally he bursts into an apostrophe of praise to Him who has delight in giving:

“Then to appoint such a reward for liberality,—an everlasting habitation! O excellent trading! O divine merchandise! One purchases immortality for money; and, by giving the perishing things of the world, receives in exchange for these an eternal mansion in the heavens! Sail to this mart, if you are wise, O rich man! If need be, sail round the whole world. Spare not perils and toils, that you may purchase here the heavenly kingdom.”²⁰

But he warns: “It is possible for you to neglect some that are loved by God; the penalty for which is the punishment of eternal [*aiōnion*] fire.”²¹

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 23, p. 598. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, sec. 24, p. 598. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sec. 26, p. 598.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 32, p. 600.

²¹ *Ibid.*, sec. 33, p. 600. (Italics supplied.)

He closes by assuring us that we may have the "King of eternity dwelling" in us,²² and be "encircled as with a diadem."²³

9. ANGELS CONDUCT REDEEMED TO ETERNAL LIFE.—Clement closes by telling a traditional story of the triumphant course the apostle John followed in restoring a wanderer, who became—

"a great example of true repentance and a great token of regeneration, a trophy of the resurrection for which we hope; when at the end of the world, the angels, radiant with joy, hymning and opening the heavens, shall receive into the celestial abodes those who truly repent; and before all, the Saviour Himself goes to meet them, welcoming them; holding forth the shadowless, ceaseless light; conducting them to the Father's bosom, to eternal life, to the kingdom of heaven."²⁴

10. THE SOUL IS "NOT NATURALLY IMMORTAL."—Nothing could be more explicit and unequivocal than Clement's earlier conclusion on the mortality of men, which appears in one of his *Fragments* (No. I, on "First Epistle of Peter"). Denying any transmigration of the soul—"The soul never returns a second time to the body in this life"—and referring to the necessity of "the salvation of your souls," Clement expressly states: "Hence it appears that the soul is *not naturally immortal*; but is *made immortal* by the grace of God, through faith and righteousness, and by knowledge."²⁵

Such is Clement's remarkable early testimony.

III. *Exhortation to the Heathen* Still Stresses Life Only in Christ

1. CHRIST OFFERS "IMMORTALITY"; SIN BRINGS "DESTRUCTION."—In timing, Clement's *Exhortation to the Heathen* was followed by *The Instructor*, and finally by *The Stromata*, produced between c. A.D. 194 and c. 202. But the *Exhortation*, designed to win pagans to the Christian faith, is first of all a

²² *Ibid.*, sec. 35, p. 601.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 42, p. 604.

²³ *Ibid.*, sec. 36, p. 601.

²⁵ Clement, *Fragments*, No. I, "From the Latin Translation of Aurelius Cassiodorus," in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 571. (Italics supplied.)

devastating exposure of the abominations, impostures, and sordidness of paganism. It contrasts them with the truths of inspired Scripture, the true God, and Christ the Saviour of men. But it already breathes the spirit of philosophy throughout, and abounds in quotations from Greek philosophers and poets—which were destined to increase in his writings. In chapter nine Clement presents the call of God and warns against being ashamed of the Lord:

“He offers freedom, you flee into bondage; He bestows salvation, you sink down into destruction; *He confers everlasting life*, you wait for punishment, and prefer the fire which the Lord ‘has prepared for the devil and his angels.’”²⁶

2. CHRIST BRINGS LIGHT OF ETERNAL LIFE.—Clement refers to Christ as the one who gives light—the “Sun of the Resurrection,” who “with His beams bestows light.” He warns against the “threatening” and the “punishment” foretold of those who flout the “grace” that becomes the “wrath” of the God, who rules the “never-ending day” that “extends over eternity.” And he warns against those who “make light of immortality.”²⁷ In chapter ten Clement exhorts:

“Believe, and receive salvation as your reward. Seek God, and your soul shall live. He who seeks God is busying himself about his own salvation. Hast thou found God?—then thou hast life. Let us then seek, in order that we may live. The reward of seeking life is with God.”²⁸

Then he comments, “A noble hymn of God is an immortal man, established in righteousness, in whom the oracles of truth are engraved.”²⁹

In chapter eleven he rehearses the “Benefits Conferred on Man Through the Advent of Christ.” Man was made free in Paradise, but became “fettered to sins.” But to man, who has “wandered in error” and was “buried in darkness, shut up in the shadow of death, light has shone forth from heaven. . . . That light is life eternal.” Thus the “Sun of Righteousness”—

²⁶ Clement, “*Exhortation to the Heathen*, chap. 9, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 195. (Italics supplied.)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 201.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

"hath changed sunset into sunrise, and through the cross brought death to life; and having wrenched man from destruction, He hath raised him to the skies, transplanting mortality into immortality, and translating earth to heaven."³⁰

Salvation or destruction—those are the alternatives.

3. ETERNAL LIFE VERSUS ETERNAL DEATH.—Then Clement adds, "Sin is eternal death," and admonishes that the Word brought salvation, so that repentant men "might be saved"; or, "refusing to obey, they might be judged."³¹ Then he exhorts:

"I urge you to be saved. This Christ desires. In one word, He freely bestows life on you. And who is He? Briefly learn. The Word of truth, the Word of incorruption, that regenerates man by bringing him back to the truth—the goad that urges to salvation—He who expels destruction and pursues death—He who builds up the temple of God in men, that He may cause God to take up His abode in men."³²

4. PERFECT "BOON OF IMMORTALITY" BESTOWED.—Clement then presents "Jesus, who is eternal," and is the "one great High Priest of the one God," as exhorting men, saying:

"For to you of all mortals I *grant* the enjoyment of immortality. . . . I want to *impart* to you this grace, *bestowing* on you the *perfect boon of immortality*."³³

And Christ adds, "I desire to restore you according to the original model, that ye may become also like me."³⁴

5. CHRIST OFFERS TO CONDUCT US TO IMMORTALITY.—Clement's closing exhortations are:

"Let us haste, let us run, let us take His yoke, let us receive, to conduct us to immortality, the good charioteer of men . . . and having yoked the team of humanity to God, *directs His chariot to immortality*, hastening clearly to fulfill, by driving now into heaven, what He shadowed forth before by riding into Jerusalem. A spectacle most beautiful to the Father is the eternal Son crowned with victory."³⁵

Thus we will obtain the "greatest of all things which are incapable of being harmed—God and life." And "our helper

³⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, p. 203.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, chap. 12, p. 205. (Italics supplied.)

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206. (Italics supplied.)

is the Word." Clement's final appeal is to choose—choose "salvation." Weigh "which will profit you most—judgment or grace," and he presents the contrast, "destruction."³⁶

IV. *The Instructor* Intertwines Our Immortality With Christ

1. CHRIST'S COMMANDS ARE "PATHS TO IMMORTALITY."—In *The Instructor*, or *Tutor*, written next and still holding to Conditionalism, Clement states at the very outset, in chapter one, that when the Word was "inviting men to salvation, the appellation of *hortatory* [exhortation] was properly applied to Him." Clement says, "Let us then designate this Word appropriately by the one name *Tutor* (or *Pædagogus*, or *Instructor*)." ³⁷ And in chapter three, after referring to the creation of man for the highest ends, he urges:

"Wherefore let us regard the Word [Christ] as law, and His commands and counsels as the short and straight *paths to immortality*; for His precepts are full of persuasion, not of fear."³⁸

2. ARE TO PUT ON IMMORTALITY OF CHRIST.—In chapter six Clement tells us that, after being "illuminated, which is to know God," we are to go on to perfection, following in the steps of Christ, with *immortality* as the climax:

"The same also takes place in our case, whose exemplar Christ became. Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are *made immortal*."³⁹

Having passed from death to life, Clement says, we are to put on immortality:

"Truly, then, are we the children of God, who have put aside the old man, and stripped off the garment of wickedness, and *put on the immortality of Christ*; that we may become a new, holy people by regeneration, and may keep the man undefiled."⁴⁰

3. PRESENT CHASTISEMENT DETERS FROM EVERLASTING

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Clement, *The Instructor*, book 1, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 209.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 3, p. 211. (Italics supplied.)

³⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 215. (Italics supplied.)

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 217. (Italics supplied.)

DEATH.—In chapter eight, on God's care for man, Clement alludes to " 'rousing the sleeper from deep sleep,' which of all things else is likest death." Clement states that "God does not inflict punishment from wrath, but for the ends of justice." "This same Word who inflicts punishment is Judge." Then he states, "Each one of us, who sins, with his own free-will chooses punishment, and the blame lies with him who chooses. God is without blame."⁴¹ Then he adds that the punishment of the disobedient is for the "good and advantage of him who is punished," the aim of reproof being "the salvation of those who are reproved."⁴² And Clement speaks of "the time to wound the apathetic soul not mortally, but salutarily, securing exemption from everlasting death by a little pain."⁴³

4. TO PUT ON ROBE OF IMMORTALITY.—Thus present chastisement, now in this present life, saves from everlasting death. Clement refers to the Saviour as the " 'fountain of life,' " and says of us that we are "dead, we need life."⁴⁴ And speaking of our Instructor, Clement says, "He wishes to save my flesh by enveloping it in the *robe of immortality*." Then he adds that those who pass "over to immortality shall not fall into corruption." Thus Christ gives us the "greatest of all gifts, His own life," because "He died for us."

His purpose in inflicting punishment on the sinners is, "if possible, to drag them back from their impetuous rush towards death."⁴⁵ In chapter ten, on how God "Restraints From Sin by Threatening, and Saves Humanity by Exhorting," Clement says concerning the life of the righteous:

"These words [Eze. 18:4-9] contain a description of the conduct of Christians, a notable exhortation to the blessed life, which is the reward of a life of goodness—*everlasting life*."⁴⁶

He thus distinguishes between immortality and the virtues of which it is the crown and reward.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 226.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 230.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 231. (*Italics supplied.*)

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 233. (*Italics supplied.*)

V. Switches in *Stromata* to Bald Immortal-Soulism

We now come to Clement's *Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, his latest and crowning work, written after a radical change of view had taken place in his concept of life and immortality. Clement's avowed acceptance of Platonic philosophy altered the entire current of his thinking and brought about dire consequences. He began to affirm what he had formerly denied, and profess what he had before condemned. Thus he executed a complete turn-about-face. He even sought to make Christ, Paul, Peter, and John appear in the light of Platonists.

But Plato had taught both the pre-existence and the imperishability, or immortality, of the soul. And Clement soon followed his teachings to their ultimate.⁴⁷ He began to use the very arguments, in embryonic form, that his brilliant pupil and successor, Origen, carried to their ultimate. Clement can rightly be designated the father of the Alexandrian Christian philosophy, as he now held in incipient form the departures that Origen developed into his revolutionary system, as will soon be seen.

1. EXEMPTS PLATONISM FROM PAUL'S STRICTURES.—Clement lays the groundwork for it all by asserting that "philosophy is in a sense a work of Divine Providence."⁴⁸ And in chapter five, headed "Philosophy the Handmaid of Theology," he declares that "before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness."⁴⁹ Then in chapter eleven ("What Is the Philosophy Which the Apostle Bids Us Shun?") Clement asserts, significantly, that the apostle Paul is "branding not all philosophy, but the Epicurean," and the "Stoics also."⁵⁰ *He thus exempts Plato and Platonism.* The philosophers, he maintains, have "laid down some true opinions."⁵¹ And soon he is citing and substituting the subtilities of Plato for the verities of the Word.

⁴⁷ Photius says that Clement, in his *Outlines* (Hypotyposes), even taught the doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls.

⁴⁸ Clement, *The Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, book 1, chap. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 303.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, p. 305.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, p. 311.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 321.

2. OLD TESTAMENT LAW LEADS TO IMMORTALITY.—Referring to the Old Testament law, Clement says, “The law . . . conducts to immortality.”⁵² And in book 2, chapter 2, he speaks of the “discipline of wisdom, . . . causing pain in order to produce understanding, and *restoring to peace and immortality.*”⁵³

He does, however, make several interesting observations concerning “those who had fallen asleep.” Thus, the Shepherd says, “‘The apostles and teachers, who had preached the name of the Son of God, and had *fallen asleep*, in power and by faith, preached to those that had *fallen asleep* before.’”⁵⁴ This is immediately followed by the statement:

“‘But those, who had fallen asleep before, descended dead, but ascended alive. By these, therefore, they were made alive, and knew the name of the Son of God.’”⁵⁵

And the Shepherd adds, “‘They fell asleep in righteousness and in great purity, but wanted only this seal.’”⁵⁶

Clement makes no further explanation of these expressions. His transition to erroneous doctrine was not yet complete.

3. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD COMMUNICATES IMMORTALITY.—In book 4, chapter six (on the Beatitudes), Clement observes that “‘he that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it,’ if we only join that which is mortal of us with the immortality of God.” We shall find that the “knowledge of God” is the “communication of immortality.”⁵⁷ But he does not here explain how.

4. IMMORTALITY OF SOUL OPENLY AVOWED.—And now the characteristic mysticism of the Alexandrian School appears openly. Chapter four, book five, is headed, “Divine Things Wrapped Up in Figures Both in the Sacred and in Heathen

⁵² *Ibid.*, chap. 27, pp. 339, 340.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 2, p. 348. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 357.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 6, pp. 413, 414.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Writers." Chapter six is on "The Mystic Meaning of the [Mosaic] Tabernacle and Its Furniture." This is followed in turn, in chapter seven, by "The Egyptian Symbols," then "The Use of the Symbolic Style by Poets and Philosophers," chapter eight, and the "Reasons for Veiling the Truth in Symbols," chapter nine.

Clement frankly discusses "Greek Plagiarism From the Hebrews," chapter fourteen. In this connection he says that "punishments after death," and "penal retribution by fire," were "pilfered from the Barbarian philosophy both by all the poetic Muses and by the Hellenic philosophy."⁵⁸ He quotes from Plato's *Republic* a story of the tortures of some in the nether world. "The fiery men" in the story he calls angels, and quotes Psalm 54:4. He then makes the startlingly revolutionary observation "*It follows from this that the soul is immortal.*"⁵⁹

The philosophers, he says, got the story of Creation from Moses, along with the concept that "*the rational soul was breathed by God into man's face.*" This was regarded as "the addition of the soul."⁶⁰ "And founding on the formation of man from dust, the philosophers constantly term the body earthly."⁶¹

5. ALL PUNISHMENT REGARDED RESTORATIVE.—Clement now begins to teach that all punishment is remedial and restorative. God uses it, he says, to reform and purify men after death, when the soul, separated from the body, is no longer hindered by the flesh—appealing for proof to Peter's statement that Christ went and preached literally to the spirits in prison.⁶² So the concept of Hell was changed over into a vast sort of Purgatory, where evil is destroyed and the evildoer purged and restored. Sin is blotted out, but the sinner is preserved. Clement seized upon the Biblical idea of the final extinction

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, book 5, chap. 14, p. 465.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 466. (Italics supplied.)

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

⁶² However, in an obviously earlier Fragment, when Clement still held to Conditionalism, he gave this interpretation: "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to the dead—to us, namely, who were at one time unbelievers" (*Fragments*, No. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 572).

of *evil* but not of the evildoer. Hell is therefore temporary, and all souls will in the end be saved. This is Restorationism.⁶³

6. PURGED BY THE "FIRE OF WISDOM."—The purification is effected by so-called "discreet fire," later called by the Latin Fathers the *ignis sapiens*, a mystical fire of which Clement says:

"We say that the fire sanctifies not flesh, but sinful souls; meaning not the all-devouring vulgar fire, but that of wisdom, which pervades the soul passing through the fire."⁶⁴

But in speaking of this fire, which purifies the condemned, Clement refers to the conflagration spoken of by the Stoics, and again to supporting passages from Plato, and an Ephesian philosopher, possibly Heraclitus. That is the support he cites—pagan philosophy, not the Word of God.

7. CHRIST PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN HADES.—In book six, chapter six ("The Gospel Was Preached to Jews and Gentiles in Hades"), Clement openly takes the position that Christ preached to the "prisoners" who were "inward" in Hades, to bring "repentance" and "conversion." But in immediate connection Clement ties in the declaration of Matthew 27:52 that "many bodies of those that slept arose," and then adds, "plainly as having been translated to a better state."⁶⁵ Then he asks:

"If, then, He preached the Gospel to those in the flesh that they might not be condemned unjustly, how is it conceivable that He did not for the same cause preach the Gospel to those who had departed this life before His advent?"⁶⁶

8. DUBIOUS FRAGMENTS ASSERT SOUL'S IMMORTALITY.—We will only refer to the dubious Fragment allegedly *From the Book on the Soul*, by Antonius Melissa, twelfth-century monk, and not necessarily authentic, which reads:

⁶³ This Restorationism was called *apocatastasis*, the Greek term for the "doctrine that ultimately all free moral creatures—angels, men, and devils—will share in the grace of salvation." Started by Clement, it was fully developed by Origen (*ODCC*, art., "Apocatastasis," p. 67).

⁶⁴ Clement, *Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, book 7, chap. 6, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 532.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, book 6, chap. 6, pp. 490-492. Cf. book 2, chap. 9, p. 357, where the expression occurs, "The apostles and teachers, who had preached the name of the Son of God, and had fallen asleep, in power and by faith, preached to those that had fallen asleep before." Again, "Those, who had fallen asleep before, descended dead, but ascended alive."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 492.

"Souls that breathe free of all things, possess life, and though separated from the body, and found possessed of a longing for it, are bourn immortal to the bosom of God."⁸⁷

And the Barocc. Manuscript, on the same Fragment, allegedly quotes:

"All souls are immortal, even those of the wicked, for whom it were better that they were not deathless. For, punished with the endless vengeance of quenchless fire and not dying, it is impossible for them to have a period put to their misery."⁸⁸

But its genuineness can be challenged, as Clement now held to Restorationism, not Eternal Torment. Dean Farrar well states it:

"Though he ["Clemens of Alexandria"] does not express himself with perfect distinctness, yet the whole drift of his remarks proves that he could not have held an unmitigated doctrine of endless punishment, but only of a punishment which would necessarily cease when its remedial object was attained."⁸⁹

Such is the tragic and confused ending of this brilliant scholar, caught in the entangling toils of Neoplatonic philosophy.

⁸⁷ Clement, *Fragments*, No. 6, From Antonius Melissa, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 580.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, p. 157.

Origen—Projector of Universal- Restoration Theory

As with Tertullian, we will first take an over-all view of Origen's basic positions, without pausing at this point for documentation. The specifics will be set forth in detail in the next chapter—with exact quotations and full references provided.

Like Tertullian of Carthage, ORIGEN (*c.* A.D. 185-254) was a son of Northern Africa. He was born into a Christian home, evidently in Alexandria. A youthful prodigy with a precocious thirst for knowledge, he seemed destined for a stellar role. Remarkable for sheer genius of learning, he came to be acknowledged as the most accomplished scholar of his generation. He was always restlessly seeking for the inner meaning, and became the revolutionary exponent of the Allegorical School of Interpretation that did such incalculable injury to the church by its introduction of Platonic mysticism.

Origen's knowledge embraced all branches—especially philosophy, philology, and theology—and all this just as the ecclesiastical language of the church was being formulated, and before the great councils had defined the limits of "orthodoxy." He was first a student in the Catechetical School in Alexandria under the noted Clement, covering the time of violent persecution under Septimius Severus in 202. Upon the martyrdom of his father Leonides, Origen had to be restrained from offering himself for martyrdom.

1. BECAME HEAD OF CATECHETICAL SCHOOL AT EIGHTEEN.—
Possessed of a vivid imagination, Origen carried on his philo-

sophical speculations to the point where they resulted in audacious theories and devices. For example, Creation was to him a continuous process. Personally, he practiced a rigorous asceticism. He possessed but one coat and no shoes, devoted himself continuously to study, and slept on the bare floor. And when Clement had to flee from Alexandria to save his life, leaving his school without a head, Origen was appointed catechist in Clement's place, in 203, when only eighteen. The school rose to new heights of fame under its youthful director.

To gain greater influence over his students, Origen resolved to master the various contemporary systems of religion. And in order successfully to combat them, he made an exhaustive study of the leading heresies of his age. *In the process he became steeped in Greek philosophy.* He attacked and refuted the enemies of the Christian faith. But in so doing he mixed with that faith allegorical mysticism and Platonic philosophy—tragically bringing Christian truth down to the level of pagan philosophy. And his admiring students sedulously spread his views all over the empire. It has been said that there is scarcely a later heresy that has blighted the church whose inception cannot be traced to Origen.

The Platonic philosophy had but recently come into prominence under the leadership of Ammonius Saccas,¹ and Origen studied that system under its greatest representative, absorbing its principles. And now his own reputation had spread afar because of his advancing a new method of explaining Scripture that removed the disagreement between the Bible and philosophy. Large numbers attended his lectures. Then after thirteen years of oral teaching Origen began his written expositions, which treatises, large and small, reached the almost unbelievable total of six thousand items.² A great library was provided for Origen by the wealthy Ambrosius, of Alexandria,

¹ Ammonius Saccas (c. A.D. 175-243), reputed founder of Neoplatonism, was an Alexandrian by birth, of high philosophical repute. He greatly influenced Plotinus of Rome (who said, "This is the man I was looking for"), as well as Origen. He was said to be a lapsed Christian (Eusebius, *Church History*, book 6, chap. 19, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 265, note 2).

² "Introductory Note to the Works of Origen," in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 229.

who also facilitated the publication of his completed works. It was thus given wings.

2. FINALLY DEPOSED AND DEPRIVED OF OFFICE.—In order to better understand the Old Testament, Origen also mastered Hebrew. And he traveled to Rome, where he met Hippolytus, as well as to Arabia, Palestine, and Greece. He was ordained a presbyter at Jerusalem, and was thus brought under the discipline of Bishop Demetrius of Alexandria, who summoned provincial councils in 230 and 231 that pronounced his ordination invalid, condemned him for false doctrine and self-mutilation,³ deposed him from office, and deprived him of his Catechetical School.

Driven into exile, Origen took refuge in Caesarea, where he started a similar school, which also prospered. He spent the remainder of his life in Palestine, where he died about A.D. 254 as a result of imprisonment and torture, inflicted under Decius. Because of his deviations from the faith and the error of his Restorationist philosophy, he was again condemned, about 544, at a later synod, and anathematized as a heretic.⁴ Origenism was thus suppressed throughout the empire and crushed as a distinct movement, though it was never without individual supporters.⁵

I. Depreciates Literalism; Exalts Mystical and Spiritual

1. MASTER MIND OF MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION.—As already stated, Origen was rated as one of the most learned men and profound thinkers of ante-Nicene times, profoundly influencing the doctrinal positions of the church. He engaged

³ Committed in his youth in supposed obedience to Christ's injunction in Matthew 19:12. Such mutilation, according to then-current ecclesiastical law, incapacitated him for ordination.

⁴ C. J. Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, vol. 4, book 13, secs. 255-257, pp. 217-228; and book 14, chap. 2, sec. 274, pp. 336, 337.

⁵ Origen was assailed by Methodius (d. 311), who denied the eternity of the creative processes, the fall of the soul in a pre-existent state, its probationary imprisonment in the body, and the spiritualizing of the resurrection. But he was defended by Eusebius and Pamphilus. And Theophilus (d. 412) catalogued his heresies—particularly his teaching of the ultimate restoration of evil men, fallen angels, and the devil himself. He denounced Origen as "the hydra of all heresies."

in constant controversies, these continuing to harass the church until the sixth century. Having become profoundly persuaded of the "philosophical truth" of the Innate Immortality of the soul, he recast his Christian views to meet the pattern of his Platonic philosophy. This involved virtually every vital doctrine.

Always inclined to be erratic, he was at first an extreme literalist. Then, swinging to the other extreme, he became the master mind of the School of Mystical Interpretation, reducing it to a system. How could the Platonic postulates be harmonized with the Bible? The genius of Origen devised a way—the Bible was to be understood *allegorically*, not literally, or as *metaphors*, under which its latent sense and real truth were concealed. By this ingenious method the Bible could be made to teach Platonic positions without unavoidable contradiction.

2. ALLEGORIZATION DETERMINED ENTIRE EXEGESIS.—Origen, most voluminous of the early writers, was the initiator of textual criticism. His crowning work in Biblical criticism was his *Hexapla*—six versions in parallel columns. It required eighteen years to produce. His commentaries cover the Bible. His great apologetic work was his able *Contra Celsus*, meeting the most scurrilous attack of the time against Christianity.

Origen's chief dogmatical work, *De Principiis* (On the Principles), the first systematic theological exposition of Christian doctrine, was written before he left Alexandria, and was the most speculative of all his works. He here conjectured about God and heavenly things, and man and the material world—together with free will and its consequences, and *immortality, eternity, eternal life, et cetera*—all the subject of our quest. But all of these were covered with a veil of allegory. And this allegorization determined the whole pattern of his exegesis.

3. ORIGEN'S THREE "SENSES" TO SCRIPTURE.—To Origen there were three senses to Scripture—the literal, moral, and

spiritual. The *literal* (which he called earthly, sensual, carnal, Jewish) had little value, was not true. The *moral*, or deeper sense (celestial, intelligible, symbolical, mystical, secret), relates to *moral* matters and the religious life on earth. And the *spiritual* pertains to the heavenly life in the world to come—his principal interest. The “common and historical sense,” was for the “more simple,” but the advanced were to be “edified by the very soul of Scripture.”^o

Origen did not deny that the Scriptures taught a literal resurrection, a personal Second Advent, and a millennium—if taken in a literal sense. But such, he contended, was not the true and inner sense. So Origen deprived the Scriptures of all force by adopting the allegorical method of exegesis.

II. Universal Restorationism Origen's Answer to Tertullian's Eternal Torment

1. DISTORTS AN OBVIOUS BIBLE TRUTH.—Origen brought forward a neglected Bible truth missed by Tertullian, but in such tragically distorted form as to nullify the inspired provision. That truth was the *ultimate extinction of all moral evil*. Origen understood the Bible to declare that sin will be brought to an end. Evil will not be permitted to exist forever. He saw that God's righteousness, justice, mercy, and power are pledged to that end. But Origen erred grievously as to the means and method of accomplishment. At that point he left the Scripture platform completely, to follow human tradition.

The reason for his error is not hard to find—the false Platonic assumption of the universal Innate Immortality of the soul. That was the *ignis fatuus* (fool's fire, or will-o'-the-wisp) that led him astray and emboldened him into promising life to those upon whom God had threatened death. And in proclaiming restoration to the incorrigibly wicked, instead

^o Origen, *De Principiis*, book 4, chap. 1, sec. 11, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 359.

of the destruction decreed, he contradicted God and deceived men. While his theory was captivating, it was nonetheless false, invalid, and wholly misleading. That was his gravest single error—Universal Restorationism instead of the ultimate extinction of all unrepentant sinners.

2. PLATO THE SPONSOR OF BOTH VIEWS.—But both Origen's and Tertullian's philosophies of the destiny of the soul had, strangely enough, been sketched out long before either advocate was born—for *Plato had sponsored both views*. In his *Tartarus* Plato had given the prototype of Tertullian's Hell. But Plato confined his endless misery for the wicked to a few "*incurables*."

The vast majority, he held, were curable. And his scene of their punishment after death was the place of their *purgation*—an Acherusian lake of woe into which the vast majority of souls would go, and from which after a suitable period of suffering they were released or restored. Even in *Tartarus*, for the incurables, some of the very wicked came forth after complete purgation.⁷ So Plato's pagan philosophy had suggested the slightly variant ideas both to Origen and to Tertullian.

3. LIFE FALSELY PROMISED INSTEAD OF DEATH.—Origen altered the intent of the plainest language of Scripture to pledge eternal life to those on whom God had decreed eternal death. Pressing on the Biblical promises of the utter extinction of all evil, he so manipulated the Scriptures thereon as to make them utterly untrustworthy as a guide and authority. Tertullian had made evil, destined to pass with *time*, to be evil for *eternity*. He thus violated God's designated difference between time and eternity. Tertullian had evil existing throughout all eternity in God's realm of righteousness.

Origen, on the contrary, held to the final extinction only of *sin*, and not of sinners. With him evil was transitory and

⁷ F. J. Church, *Plato's Phaedo* (107, 108, 114), in *Library of Liberal Arts*, no. 30, pp. 62, 63, 69.

would pass. But he made *death* to be the magic means of salvation. That was his tragic reversal.

It must in fairness be said that Origenism has as much truth (distorted as it therein is) as the rival view of Tertullian; and it presents a more pleasing view of God. But it was only a human system that contradicted the Word of God, which in a hundred places declares there is no hope for those condemned in the judgment. When evil has at last been punished, the reprobate will have passed out of being.

Origen therefore falls under the condemnation of those who strengthen "the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by *promising him life*" (Eze. 13: 22). But in that future age that shall have no end there will be no reprobate, either in *Heaven*, where Origen had placed them, or in *Hell* forever, as Tertullian had contended, for there will be a clean universe, brought to pass in God's way—and not that of Tertullian's nor of Origen's.

4. TWO EQUALLY INJURIOUS PERVERSIONS.—So it was not without reason that the apostle Paul warned against the subtleties of human philosophy (Col. 2:8; Acts 20:29, 30) and the deceptive "traditions of men," and predicted a grave departing from the apostolic faith after the passing of the apostles (2 Thess. 2:3). It was the adoption of one alien philosophic dogma that led one school of highly trained men,⁸ following Tertullian of Carthage, to *overstress divine justice* and to portray God as a tyrant of unutterable cruelty.

And now another school of theology,⁹ following Origen of Alexandria, seeking to free the character of God from the charge of injustice and cruelty swung to the opposite extreme. It stressed *the restorative power of God* and glossed over the sinfulness of sin. This school became fully as injurious to the cause of truth and righteousness, and gilded the blackness of sin with seductive light.

⁸ Including Hippolytus, Cyprian, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Jerome.

⁹ Including Gregory Thaumaturgus, Pamphilus, Eusebius, Titus, Basil, Diodorus, Didymus, and Gregory of Nyssa.

Both departures were the outgrowth of perversions of Bible truths, developed diversely but under the common impulse of the same philosophic fallacy—universal Innate Immortality. The revolting picture of God painted by Tertullian, with his postulate of Eternal Torment, created an understandable revulsion. As a result, a quarter of a century later Origen had stepped forward to counteract it with his countertheory of *universal restoration*. While Tertullian had consigned reprobate man to Endless Torment in Hell, Origen now converted Hell into a vast Purgatory for the purification of reprobate men and demons, with ultimate restoration of all to joy at the right hand of God forevermore. It was the old story of the pendulum swinging from one extreme to the other—with truth lying between, and sharply separated from, the two false concepts.

5. AVOIDS ONE PITFALL ONLY TO FALL INTO ANOTHER.—Thus we see that Origen, earliest known church writer to formulate the theory of Restorationism,¹⁰ put it forth in opposition to what he considered to be the vindictive, contradictory, and fantastic assertions made by Tertullian on the Eternal Torment of the wicked. But he avoided one pitfall only to fall into another. He saw that Tertullian, though led by Plato, had plainly fallen into a theological ditch.

But Origen, though noting the fall of Tertullian into an obvious error, did not perceive the cause of that fall. So he took the hand of the same philosophical guide, Plato, and holding to the same premise of universal Innate Immortality, fell into a different ditch, but one just as deep and delusive, and just as alien to Biblical truth. It was a double tragedy.

Tertullian's doctrine of an *eternal Hell of ceaseless torture* had presented a glaring target for the shafts of the pagan philosopher Celsus, and for his fierce attacks on such a God as execrable. This helped to drive Origen into the opposite fal-

¹⁰ Canon Constable rightly remarks, "We cannot find, either among heretical or orthodox teachers, the name of a single writer who advocated the theory before Origen" (*Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, p. 228).

lacy. Origen countered Tertullian's eternal Hell postulate with Scripture declarations concerning the final eradication of evil and God's promise of a sinless universe. But, by connecting these promises of a clean universe with his preconceived notion of the indefeasible immortality of all souls, Origen arrived, logically and inevitably enough, at the erroneous conclusion of a final restoration of even the most incorrigible sinners, and not only of demons but of Satan himself.

As might be expected, with such a view Origen utterly rejected the idea of punishment by literal fire. To him punishment would be by process of intellectual and moral forces, such as remorse of conscience, fiery trial, and the like. These would purify the soul from sin. And death was likewise figurative, and the predicted destruction was not of sinners, but of sins. So the purifying fires of Gehenna would purge away the dross, preparing the soul for the never-ending bliss of Heaven. Yet it was only an ingenious sophistry, brought about by discarding the literal for the metaphysical.

III. Pivotal Christian Doctrines Assailed by Origen

Before turning to documented detail in the next sections, let us take a bird's-eye view of the major depredations made by Origen upon the pivotal doctrines of the primitive faith. This will bring the larger picture before us in broad outline, with the details to be filled in later. Here are nine basic points.

1. SCRIPTURES ROBBED OF AUTHORITATIVE FORCE.—As noted, Origen maintained that the literal sense of Scripture is not its true meaning. Indeed, that was perhaps his primary emphasis in exegesis. Following the allegorical method of Plato and Philo, he so spiritualized the intent of the Scriptures as to deprive them of all authority and force. He denied the literality of the Bible narratives, such as the Creation narrative and the Fall, and many New Testament historical rec-

ords as well, declaring them actually to be fabrications. He declared the prophecies to be filled with dark sayings, and he muddled even the clearest and most explicit statements of Holy Writ by his mysticism.

2. SWEPT APOSTOLIC FAITH INTO DISCARD.—The basic doctrines and eschatological teachings of the apostolic faith—the Second Advent, bodily resurrection, cataclysmic end of the world by divine interposition, millennium, destruction of sin and sinners, and the establishment of the kingdom of God at the end of the age—were thus all swept into discard by Origen's allegorizing interpretation as the darkness of mystic philosophy increasingly supplanted the light of Scripture truth.

3. PRE-EXISTENCE COUPLED TO RESTORATIONISM.—Origen felt a compulsion to develop and enunciate what he conceived to be the foundational principles concerning the universe, God, and man. Two distinctive fundamentals of his system were (1) the *pre-existence* of the soul, and (2) the *universal restoration* of all souls. Without pre-existence he could not explain and defend the present state of things in the world or bring them to accord with his view of the justice of God. And without universal restoration of all to righteousness he could not bring his system to a final issue, he thought, worthy of God's justice and mercy. Moreover, his system must embrace man's free will, which must not be coerced. So universal restoration became the keystone in his theological arch, without which his whole system would collapse.

4. IMPINGED VAUNTED FREEDOM OF WILL.—Origen rightly held that God made man capable of good or evil, with power to choose as he might elect. And yet Origen would make God bound to win (or force) that responsible free moral agent back to the life he had chosen to forsake—thus actually violating the freedom-of-the-will principle he had set forth. God truly made man capable of choosing either life and immortality or evil and death. But Origen said, No, the

evil you chose shall be removed from you, irrespective of what you do, and the good that you did not choose to cherish shall be enforced upon you. Origen thus reduced the free moral agent, made to walk in the freedom of choice, to a creature regulated by the irresistible law of control.

5. RELATIONSHIPS TO THE EMPIRE REVOLUTIONIZED.—In the more mundane sphere the teachings of Origen likewise led logically to another revolution of thought and attitude on a vital question lying at the foundation of all theological and social developments—namely, Christianity's relationship to the state, or empire. Prior to Origen, the Christian community abstained from involvement in political life, refusing to make appeals to tribunals and declining to participate in military activities. They sought to guard themselves from the contaminations of the age by the simple device of separation.

Before Origen, the conversion of the Roman Empire had not been expected. Christians were *in* but not *of* the world. It had been generally believed that the empire would be destroyed by the speedy return of Christ, with His millennial reign following. But Origen planted the seed of the revolutionary concept of the gradual conversion of the empire to Christianity. He relentlessly exposed the chiliastic extravagances of the day, and laid the foundation for the revolutionary task of preparing Christianity for a new destiny—its establishment on earth and the restoration of all souls to the fellowship of God and the purity of heaven.

IV. Revolutionary Concepts of Life, Death, and Destiny

1. STRANGE CONTENTIONS IN ANTHROPOLOGY.—In the area of anthropology Origen held that in the original Creation all created intelligences were alike. But, through the exercise of freedom some developed into a higher order, whereas others fell into sin and became either demons or souls imprisoned in bodies. Death, he held, does not finally decide the fate of the soul, which may turn into an angel or a demon—

this ascent or descent going on indefinitely until the final *apocatastasis*,²¹ when all creatures will be saved.²² This was perhaps his most controversial theory.

2. ADAM'S FALL MADE ALLEGORICAL.—The material world, Origen believed, was created out of nothing, and became the abode of the fallen spirits. But Adam's fall was regarded as only allegorical, representing the fate of the whole class of fallen, embodied spirits. It was a type, taking place everywhere, at all times. Man, Origen held, is threefold. He has a material body, a soul, or vital principle, and a spirit.

Through apostasy man's reason was darkened and he was deprived of spiritual life, yet his will remained free to choose evil. All subsequent changes result from its exercise, and may effect the repeated rise and fall of all finite beings. But no salvation is absolutely final, according to Origen. Evil remains as an eternal vicissitude or threat.

3. REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPTS OF ESCHATOLOGY.—As to his eschatology, a strong current of mysticism flows all through his treatise *De Principiis* ("On the Principles"). Origen thus rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of a material body, which instead would be but spiritual. And he believed in the final restoration and complete harmony of the spiritual world. The end is to be as was the beginning. The damned, the demons, and even the devil himself will, he supposed, after disciplining punishment be brought again into ultimate subjection to Christ. This, however, was vigorously challenged.

4. MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION INVOKED TO EVADE LITERALISM.—When confronted with inspired passages that expressly declare the destruction of the wicked, Origen simply invoked the aid of mystic interpretation. His argument was simply this: The sinner will not be destroyed, for the simple reason that he is indestructible. He possesses an immortality

²¹ Greek term for the doctrine that all free moral creatures—angels, men, and demons—will ultimately be saved.

²² *ODCC*, art., "Origen," pp. 991-993.

of which he cannot be deprived. It is consequently only the sinner's *sin* that will be consumed in the baptism of fire. Hell will only retard, for a longer or shorter period, the entrance of all its inhabitants into Heaven. Indeed, under Origen Hell became no longer *Hell*, only a vast Purgatory, transformed into a sort of vestibule to the abode of the blessed.¹³

This mystical interpretation has been called the "pest of exegesis,"¹⁴ from which the church has never been completely delivered. While there are types, symbols, allegories, parables, and prophecies in Holy Writ which must, perforce, be taken figuratively, nevertheless the principle is widely recognized that the metaphorical meaning is allowed only where the literal meaning is inadmissible and absurd. That principle Origen flaunted. To his mind there was nothing absurd, for instance, in the supposition that a being which had had a beginning¹⁵ could never come to an end—despite the seeming contradictions of Holy Writ.

V. Documented Definitions and Usages

Before surveying Origen's specific teachings, first note a few definitions of key expressions and usages that pinpoint his meaning.

1. MEN ARE SOULS IN BODIES.—Origen defines "*men*" simply as "souls that are placed in bodies."¹⁶

2. SOUL IS IMMATERIAL, INVISIBLE, IMMORTAL.—Origen repeatedly refers to the "soul" as a "substance,"¹⁷ partaking of the "eternal nature," which "should last forever." It is "immortal and incorruptible," sharing the nature of God. And "every substance which partakes of that eternal nature

¹³ Origen, *De Principiis*, book 1, chap. 6, in *ANF*, vol. 4, pp. 260-262, cf. Origen, *Against Celsus*, book 6, chap. 26, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 585.

¹⁴ Petavel, *The Problem of Immortality*, p. 281.

¹⁵ Yet Origen had said that rational beings were "created" in the "beginning." They "did not previously exist," or "did not always exist." And what is bestowed can be "taken away, and disappear" (*De Principiis*, book 2, chap. 9, sec. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 290).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 1, sec. 14, p. 362.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 8, sec. 1, p. 286.

should last for ever, and be incorruptible and eternal.”¹⁸ Because of the importance of the term we add two citations as examples:

“The soul over which He exercises this providential care is immortal; and as being immortal and everlasting, it is not, although not immediately cared for, excluded from salvation, which is postponed to a more convenient time.”¹⁹

“For God deals with souls not merely with a view to the short space of our present life, included within sixty years or more, but with reference to a perpetual and never-ending period, exercising His providential care over souls that are immortal, even as He Himself is eternal and immortal. For He made the rational nature, which He formed in His own image and likeness, incorruptible; and therefore the soul, which is immortal, is not excluded by the shortness of the present life from the divine remedies and cures.”²⁰

These souls, Origen elsewhere soberly avers, are as immortal, eternal, and incorruptible as God Himself!

3. DEATH NEITHER PERISHING NOR DESTRUCTION.—Death, according to Origen, is nothing more than a departure. Man, created for life, will not be destroyed. Death produces only a change. Its “substance certainly remains.” And “according to the merits of the indwelling soul,” the fleshly body will “advance to the glory of a spiritual body.”²¹

“For death is nothing else than a departure from life—and as it was not to follow that those beings which had once been created by God for the enjoyment of life should utterly perish, it was necessary that, before death, there should be in existence such a power as would destroy the coming death.”²²

4. “DESTRUCTION” IS NOT CEASING TO BE.—As to destruction, Origen denies that it eventuates in nonexistence. The soul was created to live and cannot cease to be. It is indefeasible.

“Its [the soul’s] destruction, therefore, will not be its non-existence, but its ceasing to be an enemy, and (to be) death. For nothing is impossible to the Omnipotent, nor is anything incapable of restoration to its Creator:

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 1, sec. 36, p. 381.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 1, sec. 13, p. 313.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

²¹ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 6, sec. 5, p. 346.

²² *Ibid.*, book 1, chap. 2, sec. 4, p. 247.

for He made all things that they might exist, and those things which were made for existence cannot cease to be."²³

Then he adds, concerning those things "created by God for the purpose of permanent existence," that—

"for those things which agreeably to the common opinion are believed to perish, the nature either of our faith or of the truth will not permit us to suppose to be destroyed."²⁴

5. "FIRE" CONSUMES FUEL OF SIN.—The fire by which each wicked person is punished is his "own fire."

"Every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire, and is not plunged into some fire which has been already kindled by another, or was in existence before himself."²⁵

Of this fire, he adds, the "fuel and food are our sins"—the "hay and stubble." Evil "boils up to punishment, and is set on fire to chastisements."²⁶

6. "CONSUMING FIRE" SIMPLY REFINES.—The reference to God as a "consuming fire" calls for understanding of the "deeper meaning," says Origen. He will "purify His own people," and the "*things*" which are evil—the "wickedness"—will be "consumed by God." Thus this "consuming fire" is to "refine the rational nature," to "thoroughly cleanse away the evil."²⁷

7. EARTH'S "CHANGE" IS NOT ANNIHILATION.—When the heavens and the earth are changed they do not perish. "If the fashion of the world passes away, it is by no means an annihilation or destruction," but a "kind of change of quality and transformation of appearance." Everything is "tending to that goal of happiness," in which God will be "'all and in all.'"²⁸

8. "WORLD'S END" IS ITS SUBJUGATION.—The expression, "end of the world," indicates its "perfection and completion." It comes to pass when all enemies are "subdued to Christ,"

²³ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 6, sec. 5, p. 346.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 10, sec. 4, p. 295.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Origen, *Against Celsus*, book 4, chap. 13, p. 502.

²⁸ Origen, *De Principiis*, book 1, chap. 6, sec. 4, p. 262.

when all beings in Heaven and earth bend the knee to Christ.²⁹ That is the great consummation.

9. "FALL" COUNTERACTED IN FUTURE AGES.—Those who "fell from that primeval unity and harmony" are "by the ineffable skill of His wisdom" to be transformed and restored.³⁰ Those "removed" from the "primal state of blessedness" are not removed "irrecoverably." They "may recover themselves and be restored to their condition of happiness." In the "future world," and in the "ages to come, when there shall be the new heaven and new earth, . . . it may be restored to that unity promised by the Lord Jesus." "All those beings" who "fell away" may be "restored" under the "instruction of the angels."³¹

Such is the essence of Origenism.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Secs. 1, 2, p. 260.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 1, secs. 1, 2, p. 268.

³¹ *Ibid.*, book 1, chap. 6, secs. 2, 3, p. 261.

Origen's Multiple Departures From the Faith

To some it may seem useless and wearisome to again traverse Origen's tangent positions, this time in documented form. But it is imperative that we realize the startling innovations that Origen projected, and the strange positions taken, for these struck at the very heart of the Christian faith as pertains to man's origin, nature, and destiny. Nevertheless, these vagaries were adopted by an ardent minority forming the third school in the theological trilemma. But these deviations discount the trustworthiness of his universalist conclusions, still widely held today. Note, then, fourteen points in sequence.

I. Adopted Heathen Transmigration Fallacy

1. DISCARDS GOD'S SOLUTION TO SIN PROBLEM.—According to translator Frederick Crombie, four fundamental errors forced Origen to spiritualize away Biblical truth. These errors were: (1) The pre-existence of all human souls, and their imprisonment in material bodies as punishment for sins previously committed; (2) the pre-existence of even the "*human* soul of Christ," (3) the transformation of our material bodies into "absolutely ethereal ones at the resurrection," and (4) the ultimate salvation of "all men, and even devils," "restored through the mediation of Christ."¹ Clinging to such

¹ Frederick Crombie, quoted in "Introductory Note to the Works of Origen," in *ANF*,

basic fallacies in his concept of the plan and provisions of redemption, Origen could not do other than discard the Advent hope as the goal of the ages. That was the basis.

2. TAUGHT SUCCESSIVE TRANSMIGRATIONS OF THE SOUL.—Note Crombie's first point. Origen definitely taught a succession of transmigrations of the human soul through a sequence of existences prior to and following the present life, with condemnation and bodily imprisonment imposed to atone for the sins of a previous existence—and with one's status in the next world determined by his conduct in this life. This was vital to his theory of the immortality of the soul and its restoration. Although Origen disavowed the type of transmigration, or metempsychosis, held by certain heretics, he nevertheless personally taught actual transmigration. Thus:

"The soul, which is immaterial and invisible in its nature, exists in no material place, without having a body suited to the nature of that place. Accordingly, it at one time puts off one body which was necessary before, but which is no longer adequate in its changed state, and it exchanges it for a second; and at another time it assumes [still] another in addition to the former, which is needed as a better covering, suited to the purer ethereal regions of heaven."²

He even went so far as to assert: "Angels may become men or demons, and again from the latter they may rise to be men or angels."³ That is the second point.

Origen reasoned, by way of "hypothesis," that if the same soul could be "twice [incarnated] in the body," then "why should it not be thrice, and repeatedly in it."⁴ Then he observes, "Punishments" for the sins of this life are "rendered" by the "method of transmigration." And finally follows this astonishing assertion:

"But if this be granted as a consequence, perhaps there will never be a time when a soul shall not undergo transmigration; for always because of its former sins will it dwell in the body."⁵

vol. 4, p. 233. Dr. Crombie, the translator and annotator, was professor of Biblical criticism, St. Mary's College, St. Andrews.

² Origen, *Against Celsus*, book 7, chap. 32, p. 623.

³ Origen, "Fragment," from "Epistle to Avitus," translated by Jerome and appended to book 1 of *De Principiis*, p. 267.

⁴ Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, book 13, sec. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 9, p. 474.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Then he explains that only the "absolutely sinless" need "no transmigration." And later in the same chapter he concludes, "There will be two general forms of punishment, the one by way of transmigration, and the other outside of a body of this kind."⁶ That is boldly clear.

Origen's strange vagaries even included the following:

"It would surely be absurd to say that He [Christ] tasted death for human sins and not for any other beings besides man which had fallen into sin, as for example the stars. For not even the stars are clean in the eyes of God."⁷

And again, "For the soul of the sun is placed in a body."⁸ Such are the lengths to which he went.

3. BIBLICAL TERMS EXPLAINED AWAY BY ALLEGORIZING.—Next, note Crombie's fourth point. Origen simply added to Plato's teaching to make restoration *universal* by eliminating Plato's few "incurables," showing that they were not really incurable. So pagan philosophy furnished the original restorationist idea to Origen. But now, as a Christian teacher, he must adapt and enforce it in the language of Scripture. Plato had taught that souls in the purgative fires did not perish, for they were immortal. And to avoid the obvious intent of the scriptural expressions of "die," "perish," "destroy," et cetera, Origen explained them away by drafting upon a secondary meaning used in the language of poetry, exaggeration, hyperbole, and so forth.⁹ Thus "death" was made to mean *life*; "life" to mean *happiness*; and to be "destroyed," *to be made miserable*. So he reasoned.

Origen experienced no difficulty in this, for he maintained that Scripture has a "spiritual," as well as a literal, meaning, which fact "escapes the notice of most."¹⁰ That is the magic

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 474, 475.

⁷ Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, book 1, sec. 4, in *ANF*, vol. 9, p. 319.

⁸ *Ibid.*, sec. 17, p. 306.

⁹ Origen, *De Principiis*, book 1, chap. 3, sec. 3, p. 252; Preface to *De Principiis*, par. 8, p. 241.

¹⁰ Origen, Preface to *De Principiis*, par. 8, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 241; *De Principiis*, book 2, chap. 10, sec. 6, p. 295.

key. By this device he could assign any meaning he chose to Scripture—but, as Mosheim puts it, “always at the expense of truth.”²¹ So the scriptural warnings to the sinner that he should die *in person* were neutralized by Origen’s directing their action against the sinner’s *sin*. But in doing so Origen perverted the intent of Scripture as verily as did Tertullian.

The object of hell-fire, Origen held, is to destroy wickedness. Iniquity becomes the fuel of Hell. “The fury of God’s vengeance,” he taught, is for the “purgation of souls.” It is “applied by fire” with the “object of healing.”²² Till this evil is burned out and eradicated Hell burns on. This process which destroys evil is that of “*purgation*” of the evildoer who, in the process, *grows into the likeness of God*, which likeness had been defaced. When the process is completed he takes his place in glory.

II. Allegorizing Substituted for Literalism

But we repeat, the foundation of it all was the concept of the inalienable immortality of all souls—and this the pagan Platonic philosophy had provided. The next essential, according to Origen, was liberty to alter the obvious intent, or application, of Scripture to support his view, which he also exercised. Thus he rendered the Bible worthless as an authoritative source of truth by applying its strictures against the *sinner* merely to his *sin*.

1. LITERALISM OF CREATION NARRATIVE SWEEPED ASIDE.—According to Origen the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to “preserve the coherence of the spiritual meaning” of Scripture. The literal words, he declares, must be understood in their “spiritual meaning,” elsewhere in the chapter called the “mystical meaning,” or “inner meaning.” As they stand, the “ordinary meaning” is “always concealing the hidden meaning”

²¹ Quoted in Constable, *Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, p. 224.

²² Origen, *De Principiis*, book 2, chap. 10, sec. 6, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 296.

within the historical narrative. Thus, he asserts, many of the "events which lie on the surface can neither be true nor useful." Consequently, we must seek for the truth that is "concealed," but which is "worthy" and "inspired." Otherwise they are of little use if taken as written.¹³

"Stumbling-blocks," Origen maintained, have been introduced, and "certain impossibilities and incongruities" interspersed as obstacles to any "ordinary meaning." By this means the truth seeker is led into the "narrow path" of a "loftier and more sublime road" of understanding. Passing from such hazy generalities to specifics, Origen urges, for instance, that the historical narrative of *Creation week* be searched for its "inner meaning."

"Who is found so ignorant as to suppose that God, as if He had been a husbandman, planted trees in paradise, in Eden towards the east, and a tree of life in it, i.e., a visible and palpable tree of wood, so that any one eating of it with bodily teeth should obtain life, and, eating again of another tree, should come to the knowledge of good and evil? No one, I think, can doubt that the statement that God walked in the afternoon in paradise, and that Adam lay hid under a tree, is related *figuratively* in Scripture, that some *mystical meaning* may be indicated by it."¹⁴

So in the literal record "there are inserted and interwoven things which cannot be admitted historically, but which may be accepted in a spiritual signification."¹⁵ Thus the literalism of *Creation week*, with its vital declarations on the origin and nature of man, sin, and the fall, death, and the destiny of man, are totally swept aside. Such a position has a vital bearing on our quest.

2. DENIES LITERAL TRUTH OF BIBLICAL RECORDS.—It is essential that we understand the basis upon which the whole structure of Origen's allegorical system is built, and which was responsible for turning a large segment of the church away from her historic positions. Its seriousness is indicated by the historian Milner, who declared that "no man, not altogether

¹³ *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 1, secs. 10, 14, 15, 23, pp. 358, 359, 364, 365, 368, 373.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 16, p. 365. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

unsound and hypocritical, ever injured the church of Christ more than Origen," by introducing his "complicated scheme of fanciful interpretation" which for many centuries "obscured the light of Scripture."¹⁶

And Killen adds that Origen made the Sacred Writings say anything or nothing, according to his caprice, often maintaining conflicting views.¹⁷ In so doing Origen constantly refers to the hidden, covered, concealed, and spiritual meanings that "need the key of knowledge" to unlock and uncover them.¹⁸

Origen not only denied the *Old Testament* declarations concerning Creation week and the fall of man, already noted, but challenged the trustworthiness of the *New Testament* records, as well. As we have seen, he boldly declared that various historical narratives are "wrapped up," "concealed," and covered as with a veil,¹⁹ in order to stimulate closer investigation and thus to bring out their "mystical" meaning.

For example, the heading of section 2 in his *Commentary on John*, book ten, states: "Literally Read, the Narratives Cannot Be Harmonized: They Must Be Interpreted Spiritually."²⁰ Section 4 is headed, "Scripture Contains Many Contradictions, and Many Statements Which Are Not Literally True, but Must Be Read Spiritually and Mystically."²¹ Again, in section 5 he says, "Paul Also Makes Contradictory Statements About Himself."²² And still again, in section 17, "Matthew's Story of the Entry Into Jerusalem. Difficulties Involved in It for Those Who Take It Literally."²³

III. Spiritualizes Second Advent, End of World, and Millennium

1. SECOND ADVENT MYSTICIZED INTO "DAILY" COMING.— Turning now to specific basic doctrines, we find that the Bible-

¹⁶ Joseph Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ*, cent. 3, chaps. 15, 5, vol. 1, pp. 221, 156.

¹⁷ W. D. Killen, *The Ancient Church*, pp. 345, 346.

¹⁸ Origen, *De Principiis*, book 4, chap. 1, secs. 10, 14, 23, in *ANF*, vol. 4, pp. 358, 363, 373; see book 1, chap. 3, sec. 3, p. 252.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 1, sec. 14, p. 363.

²⁰ Origen, *Commentary on John*, book 10, sec. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 9, p. 382.

²¹ *Ibid.*, sec. 4, p. 383.

²² *Ibid.*, sec. 5, p. 384.

²³ *Ibid.*, sec. 17, p. 395.

promised second advent of Christ in power and glory, visible to every eye as our Lord returns in the clouds of heaven, is spiritualized away by Origen, as Christ is made to come "daily" in "prophetic clouds" to "every believer." He likens to children those who naively hold to a literal or "corporeal" understanding of such passages. Though prolix, note it:

"With much power, however, *there comes daily, to the soul of every believer*, the second advent of the Word in the prophetic clouds, that is, in the writings of the prophets and apostles, which reveal Him and in all their words disclose the light of truth, and declare Him as coming forth in their significations [which are] divine and above human nature. Thus, moreover, to those who recognize the revealer of doctrines in the prophets and apostles, we say that much glory also appears, which is seen in the second advent of the Word."²⁴

Thus the hope of the Early Church, the supreme event of the ages, is mysticized and allegorized away, as being only for the "simple."

2. "END OF WORLD" LOCALIZED AND INDIVIDUALIZED.—Not only does Origen mysticize and localize the Second Advent, by making it Christ's entry into the soul, but he combines with it the "end of the world," or "end of the age," making it the end of the world's dominance over the soul. Thus he completely sets aside the historic apostolic concept of the cataclysmic end of the cosmic world. This mystic "end," according to Origen, is for the "mature" Christian who "comes to perfection." Thus another of the Early Church teachings is submerged under the relentless tide of allegorization. Here are his wordy words:

"The second advent of Christ, however, in mature men, concerning whom a dispenser of His word says: 'However we speak wisdom among the perfect.' Moreover these mature ones . . . praise the beauty and comeliness of the Word; and to this second advent is joined the end of the world in the man who comes to perfection and says, 'Far be it from me that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world.' For if the world is crucified to the righteous, it has become the end of the age for those to whom the world is crucified. Necessarily, therefore, let those who have the faith to come separately to Christ, if they wish to learn the sign of the advent of Christ

²⁴ Translated from *Series Commentariorum Origenis in Mattheum* (A Series of Commentaries on Matthew), chap. 50, in Migne, *PG*, vol. 13, col. 1678.

and the end of the world, show themselves worthy to see His second advent and the second end of the world which we have taught to you."²⁶

3. SUBSTITUTES "GRADUAL ADVANCE" FOR CATAclysmic END.—As just noted, while Origen speaks of the Second Advent, he neither connects it with the resurrection nor recognizes it as marking the cataclysmic end of human history nor even as inaugurating the reign of Christ. Rather, he avers, the ultimate subjection of all things to Christ as king is brought about by a "gradual advance" through successive worlds and long ages of purification. In this way, he says, will God become "all in all." Thus:

"At the consummation and restoration of all things, those who make a *gradual advance*, and who ascend (in the scale of improvement), will arrive in due measure and order at that land, and at that training which is contained in it, where they may be prepared for those better institutions to which no addition can be made. For, after His agents and servants, the Lord Christ, who is King of all, will Himself assume the kingdom; i.e., after instruction in the holy virtues, He will Himself instruct those who are capable of receiving Him in respect of His being wisdom, reigning in them until He has subjected them to the Father, who has subdued all things to Himself, i.e., that when they shall have been made capable of receiving God, God may be to them all in all."²⁷

Just before this he had stated that God will be "all in all" when "death shall no longer anywhere exist, nor sting of death, nor any evil at all." Then "verily God will be 'all in all.'"²⁸

4. DENIED MILLENNIUM BECAUSE INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS SCHEME.—Origen opposed the millennial concept because it was incompatible with his scheme of things. Prior to his day, belief in the second, personal, premillennial coming of Christ had been the general view, together with the millennial reign of the saints with Christ, after their literal resurrection from the dead at the Advent. But Origen never spoke of the millennium except to condemn it,²⁹ and millennialism began to wane from his day onward.³⁰

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 32, col. 1642.

²⁷ Origen, *De Principiis*, book 3, chap. 6, sec. 8, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 348.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, sec. 3, p. 345.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, book 2, chap. 11, sec. 2, p. 297.

³⁰ Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, p. 196; Hagenbach, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, vol. 1, pp. 305, 306.

5. PROPHECIES DEPRIVED OF ALL FORCE.—Origen dismisses the Bible prophecies by declaring them to be “filled with enigmas and dark sayings,”³⁰ and offers the explanation, for example, that the gates of the New Jerusalem (of Ezekiel 48 and Revelation 21) are the “different modes” by which “souls enter the better world.”³¹

IV. Holds Every Immortal Soul to Be Restored

1. SOUL INCAPABLE OF DEATH OR DESTRUCTION.—Origen went farther than any earlier Father concerning the origin of the soul. Jerome charged Origen and his followers with claiming the souls of men, and the angelic natures, to be part of the divine nature and substance of God Himself.³² Origen held exalted notions of the dignity and nature of the soul, believing it had existed from eternity, was wholly exempt from perishing, and incapable of death or destruction—because possessed of an immortality of which nothing could deprive it. Indeed, this was his primary postulate. And with this he placed a second—the *ultimate abolition of all evil*. He looked forward fondly to the time when all things should be restored to their pristine purity.³³

But this was not to be brought about by the disappearance of the wicked out of the realms of the living, leaving only the godly and true, nor by the removal of a single unit from God's creation. With him life was from eternity to eternity, and once living, “always to live.” He definitely declared that “those things which were made for existence cannot cease to be.” So, to the divine soul of man, death and destruction could not come, for the soul was stronger than death and mightier than destruction. It was “for the purpose of permanent existence.”³⁴ Hell must consequently be changed into a universal, purifying

³⁰ Origen, *De Principiis*, book 4, chap. 1, sec. 10 (from the Greek), in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 358.

³¹ Origen, *Against Celsus*, book 6, chap. 23, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 583.

³² Origen, *De Principiis*, book 4, chap. 1, sec. 35, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 381.

³³ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 1, sec. 13, p. 314; cf. book 3, chap. 6, sec. 5, p. 346.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, sec. 5, p. 346.

Purgatory, by which evil would be destroyed and the evildoer purged. Sin would be blotted out, but the sinner would be preserved.³⁵

2. EVERY RATIONAL BEING TO BE RESTORED.—Origen maintained that the final consummation will come when all creatures are restored:

"The end of the world, then, and the final consummation, will take place when every one shall be subjected to punishment for his sins; a time which God alone knows, when He will bestow on each one what he deserves. We think, indeed, that the goodness of God, through His Christ, may recall all His creatures to one end, even His enemies being conquered and subdued."³⁶

That all of God's enemies will be subdued is repeated again and again. Here is but one citation:

"Seeing, then, that such is the end, when all enemies will be subdued to Christ, when death—the last enemy—shall be destroyed, and when the kingdom shall be delivered up by Christ."³⁷

Origen soberly assures us that those who have left the "primal state of blessedness have not been removed irrecoverably." They "may recover themselves, and be restored to their condition of happiness." And he adds that it is apparent that "the human race," in the "future world, or in ages to come, . . . may be restored to that unity promised by the Lord Jesus." And this includes those who have even sunk to a depth of wickedness. But such will be restored, advancing to a "better condition." And this includes "every rational nature." Thus everything is "tending to that goal happiness" when all have subjected themselves to God and He is "all in all."³⁸

3. IMMORTAL SINNERS "CONDUCTED" TO SALVATION SLOWLY.—Origen, taking the twofold position of (1) the indefeasible immortality of all souls and (2) the ultimate salvation of all souls, thought that immortal sinners will be saved but slowly. The process is spread over a vast period, for there is no hurry. The soul of the sinner "is immortal." And, "being immortal

³⁵ *Ibid.*, book 1, chap. 6, secs. 1-3, pp. 260, 261.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 1, p. 260.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 2, p. 260.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, secs. 2-4, pp. 261, 262.

and everlasting," it is not "excluded from salvation" ultimately, "which is postponed to a more convenient time."³⁹ He likened the situation to a case of poisoning that, according to his understanding, necessitates a slow cure:

"It is not without reason, then, that he who is abandoned, is abandoned to the divine judgment, and that God is long-suffering with certain sinners; but because it will be for their advantage, *with respect to the immortality of the soul and the unending world*, that they be not quickly brought into a state of salvation, but be *conducted to it more slowly*, after having experienced many evils. For as physicians, who are able to cure a man quickly, when they suspect that a hidden poison exists in the body, do the reverse of healing, making this more certain through their very desire to heal, deeming it better for a considerable time to retain the patient under inflammation and sickness, in order that he may recover his health more surely, than to appear to produce a rapid recovery, and afterwards to cause a relapse and (thus) that hasty cure last only for a time."⁴⁰

4. WEIRD CONCLUSIONS TO WHICH ORIGENISM LEADS.—Follow this concept through to its logical conclusions. According to the principles and postulates of Origen, when the chaff is burned up with unquenchable fire, the fire will *not* actually consume the chaff, the chaff being somehow transformed by means of the mysterious secret fire into wheat again. And as to the *tares*, which are separated from the wheat and bound into bundles to be burned, Origen would have us believe that instead of being burned, they too are somehow plucked from the fire and transformed into wheat forevermore.

And similarly with the fruitless severed *branches* that were cast into the fire, and the worthless fish that were cast away. But Origen would have this casting away not an actual rejection but a preparation for a blessed ingathering and preservation forever. Then there was the house on the sand, whose fall would certainly seem to be its end. But, according to Origen, after all the overwhelming it is to be raised again from its ruins and stand for eternity.

And the enemy of Christ, who is to be ground to powder by the falling upon him of the great Foundation Stone and

³⁹ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 1, sec. 13, p. 313.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (from the Greek), pp. 313, 314.

irretrievably ruined, is to be recovered and brought to build for eternity upon that which had crushed him to dust. In that way Judas, of whom it is written, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born," will be restored to an eternity of happiness.

As to the "perish" aspect ("Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3), this is to be understood just of losing one's well-being. And of the declaration, "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28), Origen asserts that after the destroying comes a *restoring* to boundless and blessed duration. And as to the warning about losing the soul, according to Origen the soul is never really lost, but at worst only processed for endless purity and happiness.

What then, on this basis, is the difference between the one who gains and the one who loses his soul? For, according to Origenism, the gainer never becomes the loser, and the loser in time becomes the everlasting gainer. It is only the differentiations that become lost.

But perhaps the strangest argument concerns the second death, which Origen implies is really a *second and eternal life*. That is on his assumption that death means ceasing to live in one's present state and coming to live in the opposite state. Thus, if the first death is *dying to God* in order to live in sin, then the second death would be *dying to sin* in order to live unto God. Thus, death is simply exchanging *one* life for *another* life. Death would therefore simply be separation from the life in which one has lived up until death, so that it may become life again—if that be clear! Such were the devious reasonings of Origenism.

V. Recapitulation: Twin Fallacies of Tertullian and Origen

1. UTTER ERADICATION OF EVIL PROMISED.—God has promised the complete termination of moral evil. As the Inspired Word has revealed the *origin* of evil, so has it likewise de-

clared that it will have an *end*—and that forever. It did not exist from all the eternity of the past, and it will not persist throughout all the eternity of the future. Evil is a thing of time, not an inevitable part of eternity. Evil will be blotted out, and not continue on in indefeasible defiance without end. All of God's attributes of mercy, holiness, justice, and power are pledged to its extirpation. The necessity of His own nature and character demands it. And He who was able to create is able also to destroy.

Hell is not to be the eternal abode and spawning place of endless evil—intensifying, imprecating, darkening, and ineradicating—throughout all futurity. The Hell that God has prepared is for the utter and eternal eradication of all sin and sinners. Tertullian's fantastic secret fire was a pagan importation. The fire of God's kindling openly and completely consumes and ultimately obliterates. The evil of the universe will be compassed by it, and be blotted out forever. Tertullian's Hell was a monstrosity, an imaginative concoction, a blot upon the character of God. Evil and misery are to be vanquished forevermore. That is the second death—and Tertullian forgot that the greatest punishment for the greatest crimes is to be cut off by death.

But there is Heaven, as well as Hell. Heaven is for sinners who have been redeemed and become saints. Hell is for the incorrigibly wicked and according to their deserving will be their just suffering. But when that designated time is over they will cease to be. All will then be wrapped in the slumber of eternal death. Rebellious life will die out, and with it the consuming fire in the charred and burned-out furnace of Hell. Unbroken silence will reign throughout its confines. Those who have not found life, so freely offered, will have found death. And the results will remain unaltered forever. There will be no unending dualistic clash of good and evil, no eternal jarring note, no unextinguishable sin. Righteousness alone will fill the universe. Evil not only will have died out but, according to the determinate promise of God, will never rise up again.

2. FALLACIOUS THREATS AND DELUSIVE PROMISES.—Origen's Restorationism was a revolt against Tertullian's Eternal Torment. Tertullian, in his misconception of Hell and human destiny, saw in every volcano a chimney of Gehenna, with the lost suffering in Eternal Torment. This brought a violent reaction to Origen. But Origen's Hell was equally fallacious, unwarranted, misleading, and un-Biblical. The fires of destruction will at last go out because those incorrigibles committed thereto have been burned up.

It does not cease because its victims are purified, and thus released for Heaven. Unrepentant sinners, human and demonic, will be obliterated, not restored. Hell is not a circuitous back door to Heaven, but the direct exit to oblivion. Its fateful work accomplished, it too will pass away forever, and a clean universe ensue.

So both Tertullian's and Origen's fire and Hell are alike false, fantastic, and fatal to true Christian faith, though in opposite ways. One threatened what God has never decreed; the other promised what God has never authorized. One is as false as the other. Origen boldly taught the spiritual purgation of all sinners by the cleansing fires of personal remorse. Thus he left Christ and His saving grace largely out of the transaction of restoration. It was largely a process of self-purification. And all this, Origen held, would consume innumerable ages, and thus strike again at the historic Biblical belief in the prophesied Second Advent and the judgment.

God's lake of fire will be real and effective and final. It will accomplish its designated purpose—the saints all safe, the sinners all obliterated. The universe will be clean at the close of sin's tragic, futile experiment. The chaff, the tares, the severed branches, will all be burned up, destroyed, reduced to ashes, come to nought, be as though they had not been. The wheat will be gathered into God's heavenly garner for all eternity. That is the finale of the plan of redemption. Grace and retribution, mercy and justice, will have had their righteous sway. And the redeemed of the universe will proclaim, "Just and



Later Supporters of Tertullian's Eternal-Tormentism—Minucius Felix, Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Jerome.

true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:3). That is the precise opposite of both Tertullianism and Origenism.

VI. Subsequent Churchmen Are Divided Between the Conflicting Schools

The reader will inevitably wonder as to what positions were taken by other prominent churchmen in the third and fourth centuries and the early part of the fifth, as regards the fate of the wicked. Where did they stand in the great three-fold division that was becoming increasingly crystallized—this theological trilemma that had developed in the church. We will not attempt to present a detailed study of the utterances of these various men, for the simple reason that they were largely the reflectors of one or the other of the conflicting views of Tertullian, holding to Eternal-Tormentism, or of Origen with his contrary concept of Universal Restorationism.

A mere listing of respective views must suffice for the two categories. This is primarily because of space limitations. But it is also, as stated, because these churchmen did not make any particularly new contributions to the question at issue. They simply favored one or the other position. There is therefore no actual omission of pertinent evidence. It is largely a question of alignment, in varying degrees, with one or the other school. So the two groups are here given simply for reference. (They are tabulated in sequence and category in the Tabular Chart F, on page 758.)



Later Favorers of Origen's Universal Restorationism—Gregory Thaumaturgus, Theognostus, Eusebius of Caesarea, Diodorus of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

1. CHURCHMEN WHO SUPPORTED TERTULLIAN'S ETERNAL-TORMENTISM.—The concept of Eternal Torment, as developed by Tertullian and consummated by Augustine, was supported by Minucius Felix, Hippolytus, Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Jerome of Antioch (with some reservations). These were generally in the *West*. As Emanuel Petavel puts it aptly, Conditional Immortality was "drowned in the rising tide of Platonism" (*Problem of Immortality*, pp. 242, 496). With this line-up Canon Henry Constable is in essential agreement (*Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, p. 229), as also J. H. Pettingell (*The Life Everlasting*, p. 32).

As suggested, these churchmen did not write elaborate treatises thereon. Rather, they but echoed the sentiments of Tertullian. We have not therefore given them individual coverage, because they developed no special evidence, and made no particular contribution to the position reflected. But their assenting sentiments need to be placed on record in this general way.

2. ECCLESIASTICS WHO FAVORED ORIGEN'S UNIVERSAL RESTORATIONISM.—Origenism, or Universal Restorationism, likewise won numerous partisans, especially in the *East*. These included Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neocaesarea, Pierius and Theognostus (Origen's successors in the school at Alexandria), Pamphilus of Caesarea, Eusebius the historian,

Titus of Bostra, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa (to a degree), Diodorus of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Essentially the same list is attested by Petavel in his *The Problem of Immortality* (pp. 281, 496), and Pettingell, *The Life Everlasting* (p. 32).

3. CONDITIONALISM GRADUALLY FORCED INTO ECLIPSE.—

The great theological trilemma to which we have referred had now become an actuality, as men took sides. Meanwhile, the doctrine of Conditionalism, which had had brilliant proponents, was being crowded into the background and being progressively overwhelmed. Evidently the lesser clergy similarly ranged themselves with the one group or the other in this same general way. By the end of the fourth century the general departure from Conditionalism was far advanced. Its virtual eclipse was not far away, along with the final submergence of Universal Restorationism.

The Eternal-Tormentism of Tertullian and Augustine became severely predominant, and did not relax its strangle hold until pre-Reformation times, when Conditionalism began its slow resurgence.

It is to be remembered that by the fourth and fifth centuries the pressures were so great, as exerted by the Eternal-Torment School, that the last champions of Conditionalism began to falter. Their later writings show a compromising swing toward Eternal-Tormentism that is tragic. So it was that the last champions of Conditionalism wavered and capitulated. From a growing uncertainty they finally espoused what they had formerly resisted and challenged. After them came the virtual blackout of Conditionalism for several centuries. It was driven underground until shortly before Protestant Reformation days, when it could no longer be repressed.

Lactantius—Emitting Light Amid Encroaching Darkness

1. REVOLUTION IN ROMAN LIFE AND THOUGHT.—We have already seen how the transition from paganism's final attempt to crush Christianity, under Diocletian, to Constantine's espousal of the Christian faith, introduced within a single generation the most remarkable revolution in thought, laws, and manner of life recorded of any empire in history. Though still a pagan at heart, Constantine accepted the "logic of events" and came to terms with Christianity. Under his edicts of toleration, world conditions suddenly changed. Christianity was no longer proscribed and persecuted, and its adherents emerged from their hide-outs in catacombs and caves. The church's adversaries were restrained, and tranquillity reigned for a time.

2. STAYING THE TIDE OF DRIFT AND ERROR.—The world's favor now became the church's new peril—her new trial of faith. Multitudes soon sought entrance into her communion because it had become advantageous and was the popular thing to do. Worldliness swept in as a result. In reaction, various Christian leaders turned to asceticism as a means of staying the ebbing tide of spiritual life. This appealed to many of the pious, and the hermitage and the monastery were explored as a possible deterrent. Meanwhile, new doctrinal errors commingled with the old. And Lactantius, to whom we now turn, who had first witnessed the anguish of persecution, and then the elevation of Christianity to imperial patronage, now undertook to stay the tide of drift and error, and to instruct the emperor. This is important to note.

Lactantius Speaks Out Amid Apostasy's Encroaching Darkness and Paganism's Final Stand.



LACTANTIUS FIRMIANUS (c. 250-330), conspicuous Latin Father, was called the Christian Cicero because of his elegance of expression and the purity and finish of his style—the “milky softness of his style,” as it has been phrased. He was one of the eminent lights of the fourth century. Jerome called him the “most learned man of his time.” Born of pagan parentage, and converted to Christianity in maturity, Lactantius’ life really spanned three epochs—(1) the uneasy truce of the church, (2) the crowning persecution of paganism, and (3) the preferment of Christianity in the Constantinian period. His life likewise paralleled that of Eusebius, who wrote in Greek, while Lactantius’ productions were in Latin.

I. Historical Setting of Interest in Man's Nature and Destiny

1. SCHOLARSHIP RECOGNIZED BY TWO EMPERORS.—Lactantius had studied rhetoric under the celebrated Arnobius, avowed Conditionalist rhetorician of Sicca, in Northern Africa. And like his teacher, Lactantius similarly came to believe in Conditional Immortality, though not always consistently. His fame soon surpassed that of his teacher and reached the

ear of Diocletian, who had established his court in Nicomedia, and was embellishing the city with noted teachers and places of learning.

Because of his reputation, Diocletian asked him to come to Nicomedia to teach rhetoric, where he remained about ten years. But upon his acceptance of Christianity, Lactantius was deprived of his post. Later, Constantine called him to his court and entrusted to him the education of his eldest son Crispus—which contact doubtless had an influence upon Constantine's profession of Christianity.

Under Diocletian, Christianity had been fiercely assailed by fire and sword, as well as harassed by philosophers resorting to ridicule and distortion. Porphyry the sophist and Hierocles held up Christianity to scorn, jeering at Scripture as inconsistent and puerile. Scurrilous reflections were likewise made upon Christ. Because of all this Lactantius felt compelled to defend Christianity, and thrust his pen into the conflict. And it was this very defense of Christianity that led him to become a convert during the time of the Diocletian persecution. To his everlasting credit Lactantius boldly confessed his faith during the height of this last and most terrible of the pagan tribulations.

2. FIRST ATTEMPT AT SYSTEMATIC CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

—He had been a master of pagan rhetoric and philosophy. Now he turned Christian philosopher and became a conspicuous advocate of the lofty moral truths of Christianity. Despite the pomp and splendor surrounding him, he lived a life of great simplicity—really of austerity. Doctrine, it should be remembered, was not yet rigid, and views on sundry doctrines varied without censure. This specifically included the nature and destiny of man. This explains the conflicting views of noted scholars at this time.

Lactantius' most noted work, *The Divine Institutes* (*Divinae Institutiones*), was composed before the close of Diocletian's persecution. It was a comprehensive apology, designed to commend the Christian truth to men of letters.

He felt that the presentations of his predecessors had not been adequate, and was burdened over reaching the educated classes. To this end he bent his powers of language and persuasion. In elegant Latin he pointed out the futility and falsehood of pagan superstitions and the vanity of heathen philosophy and its contentions.

In a way, he was the first to attempt a systematic Christian theology. And he dedicated his *Institutes* to Emperor Constantine, as the first "Christian Prince." Subsequently he himself prepared an *Epitome* of this fuller treatment to be noted later—for this abridgment embodies a pitfall that we must avoid.

3. COMPREHENSIVE CHARACTER OF LACTANTIUS' "INSTITUTES."—Lactantius' other treatises included *The Anger of God*—directed against the tenets of the Epicureans and Stoics, who had maintained that the deeds of men could produce no emotions of pleasure or anger in the Deity. Still another was *The Workmanship of God, or the Formation of Man*, on the wonderful construction of the human form—evidencing the wisdom and goodness of God, with the latter part dealing somewhat with the origin, nature, and destiny of the soul.

His famous *Institutes* comprise seven separate treatises: (1) false worship—*only one true God*; (2) idolatry—the origin of error; dealing with Creation, the development of idolatry, the deification of man, and demonism; (3) false philosophy—differing pagan philosophies versus God's revelation; (4) true philosophy—on the person of Christ, His incarnation, Messianic suffering and death, and mediation between God and man; (5) justice; (6) true worship—the two ways, of obedience and disobedience, leading respectively to immortality and to destruction, or to Heaven and to Hell; (7) the chief end of man. Book 7 deals with immortality, the return of Christ, the reign of the saints for the thousand years, and the two resurrections. In other words, it was his scheme of eschatology. He particularly stressed the "last days."

4. COURSE OF EMPIRE PORTRAYED IN PROPHECY.—Lactantius had a broad grasp of Bible prophecy, as portrayed in Daniel and the Apocalypse. He held that in the over-all prophetic outline, Rome—the then-existent fourth world power dominant in his day—was to be divided into ten smaller kingdoms. Then a powerful northern enemy would destroy three of these kingdoms, and this development would be followed by the emergence of Antichrist's rule. And Lactantius tied this Antichrist with the ruinous reign of the "beast" of Revelation 13. Great wickedness, he understood, was to characterize the last times of earth.¹

5. ESCHATOLOGICAL CONCEPT UNVEILS MAN'S DESTINY.—In order to grasp Lactantius' view of the nature and destiny of man, one must first understand his eschatological concept of the last things. Lactantius bore clear testimony concerning the two advents, as vitally involved in the plan of salvation. He sketched the origin of sin, the creation of man, and man's probation and fall in Eden—the latter necessitating the incarnation and death of Christ.²

His testimony was sharp and clear. He held steadfastly to the Second Advent at the end of the world, and to the attendant literal resurrection of the saints. The sands in time's hourglass would run out. Then would come the millennial reign of the saints, with the second resurrection at the millennium's close, to be followed by the destruction of the wicked and the renewal of the earth. This outline we will note in some detail.

6. DUBIOUS PASSAGES AND KNOWN EMENDATIONS.—In contrast to Theophilus, Novatian, and certain other Conditionalists, Lactantius believed that man was *created* immortal—not simply a candidate for immortality—but through the Fall *became mortal*. This viewpoint naturally molded his terminol-

¹ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, book 7, chaps. 14-19, in *ANF*, vol. 7, pp. 211-215. For Lactantius' detailed exposition of prophecy, see L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 1, pp. 354-361.

² Lactantius, *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, chaps. 27, 43, 44, in *ANF*, vol. 7, pp. 231, 232, 239.

ogy, and gave rise to a misunderstanding of some of his phrasings.

There are frankly occasional expressions that are difficult to reconcile with Lactantius' preponderant view so constantly reiterated. If we are to trust the translation of such sporadic expressions they would indicate that Lactantius was not always consistent. But there is also the factor of some known corruption of the text. Certain sections are recognized by scholars as bearing the marks of another hand.

Just what bearing this had on certain renditions we cannot of course know. But it accentuates certain problems as to consistency. As the editor of the treatise—A. Cleveland Coxe, "Introductory Notice" (*ANF*, vol. 7, p. 4)—recognizes, certain "loose expressions are often inconsistent one with another." This we must recognize as we examine the presentation.

II. Immortality—Lost Through Sin; Restored Through Christ

Because of the key position held by Lactantius, we will cover his teaching rather systematically.

1. GOD IS ETERNAL; MAN'S IMMORTALITY CONDITIONAL.—References to the nature and destiny of man begin with book two, but climax in books six and seven. Chapter nine of book two, sets forth this principle: "God, therefore, is the only being who was not made; and therefore He can destroy other things, but He Himself cannot be destroyed."³

That, of course, is in contrast to man. But the Epicureans, Lactantius interjects, do "not admit that the world was made by God."⁴ Then is introduced an odd expression—a hang-over of pagan concepts:

"For we, being a heavenly and immortal race, make use of fire, which is given to us as a proof of immortality, since fire is of heaven; . . . the principle of life."⁵

³ *The Divine Institutes*, book 2, chap. 9, in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 55.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 58.

Chapter thirteen differentiates between the "first" and "second" deaths, and discusses the fall of "our first parents." Man, says Lactantius—

"consists of soul and body, that is, as it were, of heaven and earth: since the soul by which we live, has its origin, as it were, out of heaven from God, the body out of the earth, of the dust of which we have said that it [man] was formed."⁶

Lactantius agrees in part with Trismegistus that—

"if the soul, which has its origin from God, gains the mastery, it is immortal, and lives in perpetual light; if, on the other hand, the body shall overpower the soul, and subject it to its dominion, it is in everlasting darkness and death. And the force of this is not that it altogether annihilates ["extinguishes," note 6] the souls of the unrighteous, but subjects them to everlasting punishment."⁷

The curious closing expression is developed elsewhere.

2. NATURE OF "FIRST" AND "SECOND" DEATHS.—Referring to the "second" death, Lactantius explains that "we term that punishment the second death [for the wicked], which is itself perpetual, as also is immortality" (for the righteous). As to the "first" death he states, "Death is the dissolution of the nature of living beings," or "the separation of body and soul." Lactantius then defines the "*second*" death as "the condemnation of souls for deserts to eternal punishments," which term he later explains. The soul, he adds, "ought to rise to the immortality which is in heaven."⁸

3. ADAM EXPELLED FROM EDEN AND IMMORTALITY.—From this Lactantius leads back to primeval man, placed in "paradise" to "devote himself entirely to the service of God his Father." God gave man "fixed commands, by the observance of which he might continue immortal: or if he transgressed them, be punished with death"—*if* he tasted not of the forbidden tree. But the "accuser" applied his "deceits and artifices to beguile ["overthrow," note 10] the man, *that he might deprive him of immortality.*"

⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 61. Empedocles, and other poets and philosophers named, had contended that men are composed of fire, air, water, and earth, as noted in Part III.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.

Then, man having transgressed, "God drove out the man from the garden, having passed sentence upon the sinner." Thus man was excluded from Paradise until the execution of the "last judgment," when death will be removed, and the righteous be brought back to Paradise.⁹

4. IMMORTALITY IS "REWARD" FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.—Book three deals at the outset with the "False Wisdom of Philosophers." Lactantius here points out the weaknesses and fallacies of the conflicting schools. In chapter twelve, discussing "the object for which we are born," and the enemies of the soul, Lactantius says that the "*reward*" for righteousness is the "continuation of its existence," or "immortality," which can "neither be corrupted nor destroyed."¹⁰

Then, in chapter thirteen ("The Immortality of the Soul"), Lactantius states: "On which subject there is great disputation among [pagan] philosophers; nor have they who held true opinions respecting the soul been able to explain or prove anything."¹¹ And the reason?—"Being destitute of divine knowledge [from inspired Scripture], they neither brought forward true arguments," nor "evidence by which they might convince."¹² And he adds, both here and elsewhere, that *this will be more fully dealt with in book seven—and thus considered later.*

5. CONFUSION AND IGNORANCE AMONG PHILOSOPHERS.—Recognizing Plato (in chapter seventeen) as "king" among philosophers, Lactantius says of the contrary witness of another (evidently Epicurus, who left on record, "Death does not exist"); "How cleverly he has deceived us!"¹³ And the Pythagoreans and Stoics say, "The soul survives after death," but "migrates from one body to another," and that it is not possible for the soul to "survive the body" unless it has "existed previously to the body."¹⁴ But, he adds, even Plato, championing "the im-

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 12, pp. 79, 80.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 81.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, chap. 17, in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 87.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 18, p. 88.

mortality of the soul," did not know "by whom, and how, and to whom . . . and at what time, immortality is given."¹⁵

6. FALLACIOUS CONCEPTS OF CICERO.—Cicero and other Roman writers "know nothing of the [revealed] truth," nevertheless they reason: "If there is nothing after death, death is not an evil. . . . But if the soul survives, death is even an advantage; because immortality follows." Thus they affirm that death brings in "a better state." On this Lactantius observes, "But each conclusion is false," for *rewards and punishments assuredly follow*. The wicked will not escape punishment. Such false reasoning, he adds, is "based on the *assumption* that every man at his birth is presented with immortality."¹⁶

And Lactantius castigates the notion that it makes no difference whether man is good or evil. The true concept, he assures us, comes through "possession of the truth."¹⁷ After death men are either translated to immortality or transferred to "everlasting [*aiōnion*] punishment." And Lactantius proceeds to criticize Plato's and Socrates' joint views.

III. Christ the Source of Our Immortality

1. CHRIST CAME TO "RESTORE" RIGHTEOUS TO LIFE.—In book 4 ("Of True Wisdom and Religion") Lactantius presents the Christian faith in sharp contrast with futile pagan views, and presents the story of salvation through Christ (chapters six to ten). Then, in chapter eleven, he comes to the cause and necessity of the Incarnation—that "there might be no nation at all under heaven to which the *hope of immortality* should be denied."¹⁸

In chapter twelve Lactantius deals with the "Life, Death, and Resurrection" of Christ—how He was "born of man," and how He "should twice come to the earth," in two con-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, pp. 89, 90.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 11, p. 110.

trasting advents—the first time “clothed with flesh,” having “assumed the form of a man and the *condition of mortality*,” like other men. And all this was that He might suffer death and rise again, and return to His Father above. Then “He shall come again with majesty and glory to judge every soul, and to *restore the righteous to life*”—and to introduce the “golden age,” with “righteousness and peace.”¹⁹ And all this is based on the word of the prophets as the Biblical basis for his position.

2. TOOK OUR MORTALITY TO RESTORE IMMORTALITY.—Chapter twenty-four tells how this “teacher sent from heaven,” with His “divine nature” and possessing “immortality,” took to Himself “a mortal body,” for “mortal eyes” could not endure the glory of heavenly majesty. It was necessary that He “closely resemble man,” to provide overcoming power, for “if” He were “immortal,” and not subject to death, He could “by no means propose an example to man.” So He was God, but “clothed with a mortal body.” But He must be subject to death and suffering.²⁰ Thus, though “clothed with mortal flesh,” He was not born “of a mortal on both sides,” but was “heavenly even in the form of man.”

He took a place “in the middle between God and man,” and became the “mediator” (note 6), “that He might be able to lead back men to God—that is, to *immortality*.” Man must “earn [*“obtain,”* note 1] *immortality*.” It is not his inherently. And Christ “*bestows* on those who conquer [sin, and the flesh], the *crown and reward* of *immortality*.”²¹

God “determined to set man free,” and sent “His ambassador [Jesus] to the earth” that He might “open the way of righteousness,” and that “man might attain to eternal life.” And all this that He might hold out “the hope of safety,” “laying down His life and of taking it again.”²² And once

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 12, p. 111. (Italics supplied.)

²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, pp. 125, 126.

²¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 25, pp. 126, 127. (Italics supplied.)

²² *Ibid.*, chap. 26, pp. 128, 129.

again, in book five Lactantius refers to the "lofty reward of immortality."²³ His emphasis is unmistakable.

3. IMMORTALITY IS OFFERED TO ALL.—In book six ("Of True Worship") Lactantius directly addressing Emperor Constantine, adverts to the well-known "two ways"—"the one which leads to heaven, the other which sinks to hell," or of "life" and "death." This is because "immortality is promised to the righteous, and everlasting punishment is threatened to the unrighteous."²⁴ These are the inevitable "rewards" and "punishments." And in it all God "denies immortality to no human being" who chooses aright. This Lactantius refers to as the "reward of immortality." He who "follows truth and righteousness" will be rewarded with "perpetual light" while those who choose evil "must be borne to the setting of the sun, and to darkness."²⁵

4. CONTRASTING ENDS OF THE TWO WAYS.—But Lactantius warns of passing "the point from which there is now no return," and of falling "headlong into a deep abyss." Such as "follow after death," having turned away from God, "truly will be cast down to hell, and be confined to everlasting [*aiōnion*] punishment." But the "heavenly way," leading upward, extends "hope beyond the present," while the road of the "wicked and the unrighteous" is "downward and on the decline."²⁶

These are the ways "God has assigned to human life"—"temporal evils followed by eternal goods," or "temporal goods followed by eternal evils." But the "enemy," among other deterrents, "dashes philosophy before their eyes, that he may blind them with the appearance of light, lest any one should grasp and hold fast the truth."²⁷ Such were Lactantius' clear concepts.

In chapter seven ("The Way of Error and of Truth") Lactantius warns against the "way of destruction and death,"

²³ *Ibid.*, book 5, chap. 19, p. 155.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, book 6, chap. 3, p. 164.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 165.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

with its devious windings, that "plunges them into death." And he urges the way of "truth, and wisdom, and virtue and justice."²⁸ The way of life, he counsels, is to be sedulously followed as a mariner follows his course over the deep, observing the sun and the heavenly lights. So we are to follow the "everlasting and unchangeable" law of God and the "great Master and Ruler of all, God."²⁹

IV. Immortality Not Inherent, but a Gift

1. PROVISION FOR ATTAINING IMMORTALITY.—Book seven ("Of a Happy Life") deals (in chapter two) with "The Error of the Philosophers," and in chapter three with a "Censure of the Stoics and Epicureans." It affirms, "That is more correct which they derived from Plato." Lactantius then summarizes Plato's argument as affirming that the "work of God" would "remain for ever." And he poses the question, "If it was made for the sake of men, and so made as to be eternal, why then are not they on whose account it was made eternal?"³⁰ He adds that God did not make the world "for His own sake, since He can exist without the world."³¹

Coming to the positive side, and the "mystery of man" and how the world was clearly made "for the sake of man," Lactantius asks, "Why did He make him [man] subject to death and decay?" Lactantius asserts that God, "the Maker of all things," placed men "in the midst between good and evil," that they might not "*attain* to immortality by a delicate and easy course of life, but might *arrive* at that unspeakable reward of eternal life with the utmost difficulty and great labours."³² That is the heart of his argument—immortality an attainment, a reward.

2. SO PLACED AS TO ATTAIN IMMORTALITY.—Thus God, "formed man from the earth itself, which He prepared for him

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, p. 170.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 171.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, book 7, chap. 3, p. 197.

³¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 198.

³² *Ibid.*, chap. 5, pp. 199, 200.

from the beginning as a habitation; that is, He clothed and covered his [man's] spirit with an earthly body." Man was "formed of a fragile substance, and could not exist for ever." Lactantius asks, "Why, then, did He make him [man] frail and *mortal*, when He had built the world for his sake?"

He answers, "That He might set forth before man virtue, . . . by which he might be able to gain the *reward* of immortality." Man, he says, consists of "two parts, body and soul." Then he adds, "We received the former at our birth; we *attain* the latter by striving, that immortality might not exist to man without any difficulty."³³ Such was his reasoning.

3. IMMORTALITY NOT A CONSEQUENCE OF NATURE.—Lactantius continues his closely reasoned argument by saying, "He [God] has given us this present life, that we may either lose that true and eternal life by our vices, or win it by virtue." Otherwise this "bodily life" will be "destroyed." But "that which has an end does not contain the chief good."³⁴ And now Lactantius comes to the heart of the issue:

"For other animals incline towards the ground, because they are earthly, and are incapable of immortality, which is from heaven; but man is upright and looks towards heaven, because *immortality is proposed to him; which, however, does not come, unless it is given to man by God.* For *otherwise* there would be no difference between the just and the unjust, since every man who is born would become immortal. *Immortality*, then, is not the consequence ["sequela," footnote] of nature, but the *reward and recompense of virtue.*"³⁵

Words could scarcely be more explicit—man is not universally, innately immortal, but is a candidate for immortality, and may be made immortal. That is the heart of Lactantius' argument.

4. GOD ALONE CAN CONFER IMMORTALITY.—From this Lactantius reaches this conclusion:

"This argument teaches that *man is born mortal*; but that he after-

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 200.
³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201. (Italics supplied.)

wards *becomes* immortal, when he begins to live in conformity with the will of God, that is, to follow righteousness."³⁶

And he concludes, "Therefore this temporal light ought to be subject to that eternal life, as the body is to the soul." And he adds, "He who prefers to live well for eternity, will live badly ["in discomfort," note 9] for a time . . . as long as he is on earth." Contrariwise, "he who shall prefer to live well for a time" will be condemned of God to "eternal [*aiônion*] punishment."³⁷ Then he concludes:

"God seeks to be worshipped, and to be honoured by man as a Father, that he may have virtue and wisdom, which alone *produce immortality*. For because no other but Himself is able to *confer* that immortality, since He alone possesses it, He will grant to the piety of the man, with which he has honoured God, this *reward, to be blessed to all eternity*, and to be for ever in the presence of God and in the society of God."³⁸

5. IMMORTALITY IS RECEIVED AS REWARD.—Lactantius then sums up his whole argument to this point in this closely reasoned, comprehensive paragraph, thrice declaring unequivocally that we "*receive*" immortality, and are "*rewarded*" with immortality:

"Now let us mark the whole argument by a brief definition. The world has been created for this purpose, that we may be born; we are born for this end, that we may acknowledge the Maker of the world and of ourselves—God; we acknowledge Him for this end, that we may worship Him; we worship Him for this end, that we may *receive immortality as the reward of our labours*, since the worship of God consists of the greatest labours; for this end we are *rewarded with immortality*, that being made like to the angels, we may serve the Supreme Father and Lord for ever, and may be to all eternity a kingdom to God. This is the sum of all things, this the secret of God, this the mystery of the world, from which they are estranged, who . . . have devoted themselves to the pursuit of earthly and frail goods."³⁹

Such is the source and the basis of man's immortality. It is for the righteous only, Lactantius avers.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.) (Three paragraphs follow here which Bishop Coxe, the editor, says [p. 201, note] are of "doubtful" authorship. They are accordingly not considered, as they have no material bearing.)

³⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, p. 203.



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Lactantius Stresses the Prophesied Last Days of Earth, the Resurrection of the Righteous, and Utter Destruction of the Wicked.

V. Conditionalism Placed in Eschatological Setting

1. FALSE PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS ON IMMORTALITY.—Then, starting with chapter eight, Lactantius begins a recital of the paralleling, but false, teaching of the philosophers that aggressively persists on the immortality question. First, he says, “The one chief good, therefore, is immortality, for the *reception* of which we were originally formed and born.” Then he takes up specifically the specious “arguments of Plato,” who reasoned that “whatever has perception by itself, and always moves, is immortal,” but “that which has no beginning of motion is not about to have an end,” because it “cannot be deserted by itself.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, p. 205.

But, Lactantius counters, "This argument would give eternal existence even to dumb animals," which he denies. Plato adds that the human soul has the additional qualities of reflection, perception, memory, foresight, and knowledge. So the philosopher considered that the *body* is subject to "dissolution," while the *soul*, when freed from the body prison, "flies to the heaven, and to its own nature." This, Lactantius says, is a "brief summary of the tenets of Plato."⁴¹ And to this Pythagoras and Pherecydes agreed.

Lactantius next cites Dicæarchus, Democritus, and Epicurus, as arguing *against* such an opinion, with Tullius as wholly uncertain.⁴² Trismegistus is then mentioned, with his variant view that "the soul does not perish, nor undergo dissolution, but that it remains for ever." Moreover, the philosopher maintains, "the gift of virtue to man alone is a great proof that souls are immortal." Lactantius observes, "But when death has been undergone, what further good can be hoped for except immortality."⁴³

2. PHILOSOPHICAL CONFUSION REGARDING IMMORTALITY.—Touching in chapter ten on Cicero's *Disputations*—that the chief goal of man happens after death, and that for his good, death "does not extinguish man, but admits him to the reward of virtue," while the evil will "suffer eternal punishment"—Lactantius says the Sacred Writings call this the "second death." So, as "two lives are proposed to man," so also are "two deaths."⁴⁴

Continuing the recital of the philosophical contention concerning "soul and body," in relation to the "last times" (chapter eleven), Lactantius rehearses their contention that when "death itself shall be ended," their souls will "rise again to everlasting life," and receive the "fruits of immortality," and "death must be eternal" with "perpetual punishments" and "infinite torments." This is his full statement of their position:

⁴¹ *Ibid.*
⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 206.
⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 10, p. 207.

"Therefore, when the times which God has appointed for death shall be completed, death itself shall be ended. And because temporal death follows temporal life, it follows that souls rise again to everlasting life, because temporal death has received an end. Again, as the life of the soul is everlasting, in which it receives the divine and unspeakable fruits of its immortality; so also its death must be eternal, in which it suffers perpetual punishments and infinite torments for its faults."⁴⁵

"Now," Lactantius says, "let us refute the arguments" that the body is "mortal" and that the soul is born with the body and "must necessarily die with the body," referring especially to Lucretius.⁴⁶ And he adds that "the soul cannot entirely perish, since it received its origin from the Spirit of God, which is eternal."⁴⁷ The statement is confused and confusing, but it is part of the record.

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS ALONE "PROCURES" ETERNAL LIFE.—After playing up the conflicting opinions of the philosophers, Lactantius continues in chapter thirteen by stating that "man was created for the worship of God, and *for receiving immortality from Him.*"⁴⁸ He next cites Hermes as placing man in a partly mortal and partly immortal position, then alludes to several other philosophers—Polites, Apollo of Miletus, as well as the *Sibyllines*—and to Aristoxenus, who "denied that there is any soul at all," maintaining it is like the "harmony," or music, of the lyre, produced by "the tightening of the strings."⁴⁹

Then, at the outset of chapter fourteen ("Of the First and Last Times of the World"), Lactantius discusses "*how and when* it [immortality] is given to man," and turns to meeting the "errors" and "folly" of those who "imagine that some mortals have become gods by the decrees and dogmas of mortals."⁵⁰ He then sets forth his own position:

"It is righteousness alone which *procures* for man eternal life, and that it is God alone who *bestows the reward* of eternal life. For they who are said to have been immortalized by their merits, inasmuch as they possessed neither righteousness nor any true virtue, did not obtain for themselves immortality, but death by their sins and lusts; nor did

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, p. 207.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 12, p. 208.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, p. 210.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, p. 211.

they deserve the reward of heaven, but the punishment of hell, which impends over them, together with all their worshippers. And I show that the time of this judgment draws near, that the *due reward* may be given to the righteous, and the deserved punishment may be inflicted on the wicked."⁵¹

4. BEGINNING AND END OF THE WORLD.—Declaring that Plato and other philosophers are ignorant of the primal "origin of all things," Lactantius states that only through Holy Scripture can we know the truth concerning the "beginning and the end of the world, respecting which we will now speak." The philosophers fallaciously "enumerate thousands of ages from the beginning of the world," whereas "the six thousandth year is not yet completed, and . . . when this number is completed the consummation must take place," and human affairs be "remodelled." This was the literal Bible basis of Lactantius' faith. And, he affirms, "God completed the world and the admirable work of nature in the space of six days [by fiat creation], as is contained in the secrets of Holy Scripture."⁵²

5. FORMATION OF MAN AND RESULTS OF FALL.—Man, Lactantius continues, was made on the sixth day of Creation week. And he adds that as the result of the Fall he became a "mortal and imperfect man," "formed from the earth, that he might live a thousand years in this world." Nevertheless, in "this earthly age" is to be formed a "perfect man," that "being quickened by God" may "bear rule in this same world through a thousand [millennial] years." And the prophets "announce the end and overthrow of all things after a short time," in the "last old age of the wearied and wasting world."⁵³

And he repeats, in chapter fifteen, that in the "last consummation of the times," as "the end of the world approaches, the condition of human affairs must undergo a change, and through the prevalence of wickedness become worse."⁵⁴ Faith will wane, righteousness decrease, justice be confounded, and laws be destroyed. Peace will be superseded by tumult and war, and the rulership of the West be threatened by the East.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*
⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 212.
⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 15, p. 212.

And the judgments of God will fall, for the "works of mortals are mortal."⁵⁵ Even the Sibyls, he adds, recognized that "Rome is doomed to perish," under the judgments of God.

VI. Immortality's Place in the Prophetic Outline

1. ROME'S DIVISION, ANTICHRIST, AND COMING CLIMAX.—In chapter sixteen ("Of the Devastation of the World") Lactantius plunges into Bible prophecy, and tells how Rome, which followed the world kingdoms of Persia and Grecia, will pass, being divided into ten smaller kingdoms. Then, he declares, will a "powerful enemy"—Antichrist—arise that will harass with "intolerable rule," persecuting, and substituting his own laws, and profound disturbances will follow. Celestial signs will also be seen in the sun and moon, and the "gliding of the falling stars."⁵⁶

And then a false prophet will arise that will demand worship, and create unsurpassed "distress and tribulations." And Antichrist will "desolate" the world for "forty-two months," and seek to impose his mark. Then the saints will flee into the "solitudes." And finally the God of Heaven will deliver them and "destroy all the wicked."⁵⁷

2. SECOND ADVENT AND THE RESURRECTION.—Chapter nineteen portrays the second advent of Christ in power and glory, as He descends as Deliverer, Judge, and Avenger. The wicked and Antichrist will be destroyed.⁵⁸ Thus Lactantius unfolds his remarkable eschatology. The "dead shall rise again," on whom God will "pass judgment." The saints, however, will be delivered and will reign with Christ during the thousand years.⁵⁹ The good are "given to a life of blessedness," while the evil are "condemned to punishment."⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 16, p. 213.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 17, pp. 214, 215; cf. chap. 19, p. 215.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 19, p. 215.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 22, p. 218.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 20, p. 216.

3. PARALLELING BUT DISTORTED CONCEPTS OF POETS.—All through this vivid recital Lactantius interweaves many of the similar and familiar statements of the poets, which were “near to the truth.”⁶¹ And in their strange commingling of truth and error Lactantius recites in chapter twenty-two, *their* “partly corrupted”⁶² teachings concerning the wicked undergoing “tor- tures and everlasting fire,”—referring to the alleged “divine fire” of pagan lore, that “replaces” or renews as it “consumes.”⁶³ Thus he alludes to these “figments of the poets.” And with these distorted concepts of truth there was a misshapen view of coming events, for they did not know how, or when, the last things would occur.

Let no one imagine, Lactantius says, “that souls are immediately judged after death.” Rather, they are detained until “the great Judge shall make an investigation of their deserts.” Then the pious will “receive the *reward* of immor- tality,” and sinners be “destined to certain punishment.”⁶⁴

It is to be especially noted that the philosophers and poets cited, and particularly Plato, all fancied the soul to be immortal. Samples of confusing and conflicting citations are introduced from Pythagoras, Chrysippus, and Cicero. Then Lactantius says impressively, “Let us return from human to divine things.”⁶⁵ He had already declared:

“God will come, that, having cleansed the earth from all defilement, He may restore the souls of the righteous to their renewed bodies, and raise them to everlasting blessedness.”⁶⁶

He had also said: “We affirm the doctrine of the resurrec- tion, and teach that souls will return to another life.” And “the resurrection cannot take place while unrighteousness still pre- vails.” This he places in substitution for the uncertainties and confusions of the teaching of those who “most foolishly believed the poets.”⁶⁷

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 216.

⁶² *Ibid.*, chap. 22, p. 217.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 217.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 23, p. 218.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 22, p. 218.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

4. SATAN BOUND, CITY PLANTED, WICKED DESTROYED.—In chapter twenty-four he states that the Son of God “shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” “When He shall have destroyed unrighteousness, and executed His great judgment, and shall have recalled to life the righteous,” He “will be engaged among men a thousand years.” Then the “prince of devils” is bound during the thousand years. The “sacred city shall be planted in the middle of the earth.”⁶⁸ And now, he affirms—on the basis of the sayings of the “prophets”—comes the loosing of the devil, and the siege of the surrounded city by the wicked. Then God shall “utterly destroy them,” and the wicked will “utterly perish.”

This “second” resurrection, of the “unrighteous,” is followed by “everlasting punishments.” Lactantius then affirms: “This is the doctrine of the holy prophets which we Christians follow.”⁶⁹ Such, he affirms without recorded contradiction, is the avowed teaching of the church in the *fourth* century. He was the outstanding Conditionalist spokesman of his time.

And now, having finished his treatise, and addressing the emperor, he states that “all factions have now been hushed,”⁷⁰ the Christians are allowed freedom, and “truth now comes forth from obscurity, and is brought into light.”⁷¹ That was the purpose of his treatise. It was the classic defense of his day, not too long before the tide of recession began to turn, with its heavy repression of Conditionalism.

5. LACTANTIUS' CONDITIONALISM PRESENTED TO EMPEROR.—Such is the remarkable witness, for the time, that Lactantius addressed to the Roman emperor, Constantine, and to all pagan citizens. Paralleling the familiar, partial truths enunciated by their own philosophers and poets, which were commonly understood and accepted—but which often veered away from Biblical truth, and its prophetic outline concerning the last things—and the final destiny of man and the

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 24, p. 219.
⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 26, pp. 220, 221.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 221.
⁷¹ *Ibid.*

world, Lactantius stands forth as a Conditionalist spokesman—albeit inconstant at times—maintaining that immortality is a gift from God received by the righteous only at the Second Advent and concurrent resurrection of the saints.

And this, be it noted again, was written in the great fourth-century transition hour of the church, not only as the breakup of Rome impended but as the tide of Innate Immortal-Soulism was steadily rising in parts of the empire.

VII. Pitfalls Lurk in Abbreviated *Epitome*

1. CONTAINS CERTAIN "DUBIOUS PASSAGES" THAT MISLEAD.—According to the translator "The authorship of this abridgement [the *Epitome*] has been questioned in modern times."⁷² Fletcher adds that "the greater part of the work was wanting in the earlier editions," and the entire *Epitome* was only discovered in the beginning of the nineteenth century in a manuscript at Turin.⁷³ There are admittedly certain "dubious passages."⁷⁴ Bishop Coxe, the American editor, in commenting on such "dubious passages" in the *Institutes*, states that the most important one is "wanting in twenty-eight Mss., but is found in nineteen."⁷⁵

2. LACTANTIUS RECOGNIZES HAZARD OF ABRIDGMENT.—In the Preface at the very outset of the *Epitome* Lactantius states that it had been "a long time" since he first wrote his original full *Divine Institutes*. And he frankly states in his opening chapter that a "compressed" epitome "becomes less clear by its very brevity." Nevertheless, he will attempt to "contract that which is diffuse and to shorten that which is long."⁷⁶ The editor, Coxe, in a footnote is constrained to refer to the reduced *Epitome* as "a specimen of the abridgements made by authors and editors, owing to the great expense of books

⁷² William Fletcher, "Introductory Notice to Lactantius," in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, note 3.

⁷⁴ *The Divine Institutes*, book 7, chap. 27, in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 223.

⁷⁵ *On the Workmanship of God*, "General note, by the American editor," in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 300.

⁷⁶ *The Epitome of Divine Grace*, Preface, in *ANF*, vol. 7, p. 224.

in manuscript. They have been sources of great injury to literature."⁷⁷

The precise phrasings of the *Epitome* should not, therefore, be given too serious consideration.

3. PREPONDERANT VIEW IS CONDITIONALIST.—In the light of the foregoing, too much credence cannot be placed on certain expressions in the *Epitome* that are at variance with the preponderant and repeated emphasis in the text of the full *Institutions*. But it is to be borne in mind that even in the *Epitome* Lactantius again and again speaks of the "reward of immortality." Note a few and the chapter sequence:

"The heavenly *reward* of immortality from which they fell" (chapter 28).

"Crown the victorious with the reward of immortality" (29).

"That we may obtain that eternal *reward*" (35).

"Might gain the *reward* of immortality" (41).

"The befitting *reward* of immortality" (67).

"That they may receive the *reward* of immortality" (69).

Of similar intent are the expressions—

"They *attain* to immortality" (68).

"They *receive* immortality, that they may serve God forever" (69).

"Man may *receive from God* immortality" (69).

This constant emphasis is not to be offset by the other occasional conflicting expressions of the *Epitome*, the trustworthiness of which has been impugned. The gist of the case appears in chapter fifty-five.

4. PRESENTED WITH "GARMENT OF IMMORTALITY."—Answering the questions as to "by whom," "to whom," "in what manner," and "at what time" immortality is to be "*given*," Lactantius says it is at "the end of the world."⁷⁸ The "heaven shall be opened in a tempest, and Christ shall descend with great power," in "fiery brightness" and with "a countless host of angels." Then He "will raise the *righteous* dead to eternal life."⁷⁹ Now comes his climactic statement:

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 224, note 1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

"After these things God will renew the world, and transform the righteous into the form of angels, that, being *presented with the garment of immortality*, they may serve God forever."⁸⁰

Such is the main *Epitome* witness of Lactantius.

VIII. Significance of Lactantius' Conditionalist Witness

Thus we find the celebrated Lactantius of Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, addressing the Roman emperor Constantine as late as the fourth century, still maintaining the Conditional Immortality School of conviction, predominant throughout the bulk of the second century.

More than a century had now passed since Athenagoras, and Tertullian and his school had projected the concept of universal Innate Immortal-Soulism, holding vehemently to the Eternal Torment of the immortal-wicked thesis. (On this latter point Lactantius was confused.) Furthermore, a century had elapsed since Origen and his school, while maintaining the same basic universal Innate Immortal-Soulism postulate, had introduced his countertheory of Universal Restorationism.

So these three schools of thought on the origin, nature, and destiny of man were still existent and militantly vocal, side by side in the fourth century as here shown, and as visually portrayed on Tabular Chart F, on page 759. The significance of this fact should not be lost. Then, a century later, the powerful Augustine, through his prestige and influence, imposed the Innate-Immortality dogma on the dominant church generally, and Conditionalism was soon crowded into eclipse.

This virtual blackout remained as a blinding smog for centuries, until the early dawn of the Protestant Reformation. Only intermittent voices or occasional groups continued to witness to Conditionalism. The darkness of Platonic Immortal-Soulism well-nigh overwhelmed the flickering light of apostolic Conditionalism, long in general obscurity. That is the trail we will follow across the centuries in volume two.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Athanasius—Then Conditionalism Into Eclipse

As we come to the last spokesmen for the Conditionalist and Immortal-Soulist schools—Athanasius and Augustine, respectively—that we shall trace in volume one, let us take a retrospective view of the path we have traversed here in historical Part IV, covering the first five centuries of the Christian Era. These last chapters comprise a tragic tale of shifting realignment among the three schools of thought on the nature and destiny of man, each well crystallized by the fourth century. They reveal an inexorable shift in power, and a foreboding pattern for the future. In due course, two of these three schools on man's nature and destiny become submerged by the ascendant school stressing the dogma of Eternal Torment for the damned. Darkness descended as the light of Conditionalism was increasingly suppressed.

We have space only for the barest outline of this saga of tragic suppression. We must restrict ourselves merely to mentioning a few representative names, noting little more than their churchly positions and locations, as they take their position in this fateful change-over. With an eye on Tabular Chart F we can easily follow the developments, now moving on with accelerating momentum. It is actually a portrayal of the repression of opposition and the emerging supremacy of error. Note first the two basic lines of departure from the apostolic platform—that is, of the Conditionalist School. They reveal a tragic development.

I. Shifting Emphasis of the Three Schools Concerning the Soul

1. HISTORIC ALIGNMENTS IN ANTE-NICENE PERIOD.—Though we have touched upon them before, following the time of TERTULLIAN (d. c. 240)—and the steady growth of the *second* school in the theological trilemma that we have been tracing—we find that they gained the support of HIPPOLYTUS, bishop of Portus Romanus (d. c. 236) and friend of Origen, and CYPRIAN, bishop of Carthage (d. c. 258) and admirer and successor of Tertullian, as they trod in Tertullian's fiery footsteps. That is, they held to the universal Innate Immortality of all souls, together with the dreadful corollary of the Eternal Torment of the wicked. (And both Hippolytus and Cyprian lived *prior* to the notable Council of Nicea in 325.)

In the *third* school—that of the rival Universal Restorationism—are found GREGORY THAUMATURGUS of Neocaesarea (d. c. 270), PAMPHILUS of Caesarea (d. 309), along with THEOGNOSTUS (d. c. 282) and PIERIUS, Origen's successors in the school at Alexandria. These men close the line of Ante-Nicene Fathers of this school. And these earlier witnesses, it is to be remembered, were predominantly *Greek*.

Meanwhile, Conditionalist NOVATIAN of Nicomedia (d. c. 258), and ARNOBIUS of Sicca (d. c. 330), similarly close the ante-Nicene line of the Conditionalist or *first* school of witnesses. These men have already been presented quite fully.

2. POST-NICENE SHIFTING OF GREATEST IMPORT.—Then came the epochal general Council of Nicea in 325, with its momentous decisions concerning the Godhead. And about this time appeared the bold Conditionalist witness of LACTANTIUS of Nicomedia, noted in the preceding chapter. Following him comes the distinct alteration in emphasis. By now the church is predominantly Latin, and Conditionalism is rapidly passing into eclipse. The learned ATHANASIUS of Alexandria (d. 373), about to be covered, gives but feeble voice to the redemptive positions stressed in Conditionalism. And his is

the last prominent voice before the transition. This gives a bit of setting, and reveals the changing times.

Meanwhile, some seven ecclesiastics still support the Restorationist School in its last hopeless stand. But they were diminishing reverberations, as it were, merely reiterating what had been said again and again. At the same time, the rising tide of the Eternal-Torment school of Immortal-Soulism attracted four staunch adherents to the Tertullian position, climaxing with the redoubtable AUGUSTINE of Hippo in the fifth century. Such is the over-all picture. It is fraught with deep significance. The battle for domination was now on in dead earnest. Eternal-Tormentism was out to impose its view on all.

After Universal Restorationist BASIL, bishop of Caesarea (d. 379), DIODORUS, bishop of Tarsus (d. c. 390), blind DIDYMUS (d. 398), of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, GREGORY, bishop of Nyssa (d. c. 395), and THEODORE, bishop of Mop-suestia (d. 428), had each spoken, the Restorationist line practically ceased—and remained silent for centuries, following suppression by condemnation of the second Council of Constantinople in 553.

3. ULTIMATE ASCENDANCY OF ETERNAL-TORMENT SCHOOL.—As already noted, in the now powerful and expanding Eternal-Torment school of post-Nicene times must be included AMBROSE, bishop of Milan (d. 397), CHRYSOSTOM, bishop of Constantinople (d. 407), JEROME of Bethlehem (d. 420), of Vulgate translation fame, with the renowned AUGUSTINE, bishop of Hippo (d. 430), coming at the climactic end of the line. His powerful voice constituted the ultimate. He furnished the imprimatur.

These all opposed the Restorationist school of Origen as well as the Conditionalist, and thus advanced the never-ending-torment postulate of Tertullian. And now with the appearance of Augustine the ascendant position became established, and was henceforth dominant and oppressive. In this way Eternal-Tormentism came to be the inexorable dogma of the Catholic

Athanasius of Alexandria Gives
but Feeble Voice to the Positions
of Conditionalism.



Church as it took its position as the controlling medieval ecclesiastical power, suppressing all opposing views.

So it was that Conditionalism and Restorationism were both, by the sixth century, virtually crushed and driven underground. The Eternal-Torment school of Tertullian-Augustine was at last practically unchallenged. And it continued in the ascendancy for centuries—consolidating its power and brooking no opposition. But before we turn to Athanasius, and the momentous hour of transition striking at that time, we must first note an impending movement of a different character that had arisen, that has a definite bearing on the stature and testimony of Athanasius.

II. The Athanasius-Arius Controversy and the Nicene Creed

We here digress long enough to set forth the issues involved in the unhappy irruption of Arianism, which brought the Christian Church to another crisis of a different nature, this time in the fourth century. Arianism, it should be added, reappears periodically across the centuries, and the issues involved have a definite bearing on our quest. Hence this divergence.

The doctrine of the pre-existent Logos was the subject

of prolonged controversy in the crucial fourth century. Pressures from Gnosticism with its emanation theory, and from Ebionism with its total rejection of Christ's deity, forced the church to make a definitive expression of view on the issues at stake. Some sought to escape the difficulty by absolute identification of Father and Son. The problem was to distinguish between Father and Son without denying either the humanity or the absolute deity of the latter.

Various devices were offered—as by Tertullian, and by Dionysius of Rome, and the concept of subordination and Sabellianism.¹ But in the early part of the fourth century decision had to be made as to whether the church should regard the Son as but a creature, not God by nature and hence not eternal, and therefore not in the highest sense divine; or, that He is uncreated, eternal, truly God, and of the same essence with the Father—the famous Nicene term being *homoousios* (“of one substance”)—yet with a personality distinct from that of the Father. That was the crux of it all.

I. ABSOLUTE DEITY OF CHRIST AT STAKE.—The absoluteness of the Christian religion, as well as the integrity of the person of Christ, was at stake. Christianity could not remain content with a concept that involved the subordination of its Head. If Christianity is the absolute religion, Christ must be regarded as absolutely divine. It was therefore necessary that the Athanasian formula should, at Nicea, become a fundamental part of the declared Christianity of subsequent centuries.

It should be noted that it was *Western* Christians who saw the need of asserting the absolute deity of Christ, whereas *Eastern* Christians spent much of their time and energy on speculative hairsplitting. The Arian controversy was widespread and prolonged, and raged for nearly a century. It engaged the energies of nearly all prominent Christian spokesmen of the

¹ Projected by SABELLIUS (third-century churchman), who affirmed that there is but *one divine essence*, which became operative in *three temporarily successive manifestations*. It was a trinity of successive revelations. Hence he maintained that the Godhead reveals only one member at a time—the Father in the Old Testament, the Son in the period of the Incarnation, and the Holy Spirit following in inspiration. Each, after fulfilling His mission, returned, he alleged, into the abstract monad.

time, and was the occasion of much violence, of expression and otherwise. It rent asunder whole sections of Christendom, and penetrated other related areas of doctrine as well. And it bore upon the nature of man.

2. THE ARIAN VIEW SUMMED UP.—ARIUS (c. 256-336), a Libyan by birth, was a presbyter of the Alexandrian church, where the allegorical interpretation prevailed. But, curiously enough, in opposition to the allegorical concept Arius interpreted the Bible grammatically and historically. He demanded a clear and rational statement. He rejected Origen's "eternal generation" theory. But a large number who held with Origen rejected the Arian theory of subordination of the Person of Christ. Arius held that Jesus, the Son of God, was *not* co-eternal with the Father, and must be held *external* to the divine essence, and only a creature. The issue was basic. The ARIAN VIEW may be summed up as follows:

(1) The Son was created out of nothing; hence He is *different in essence* from the Father. He is the Logos, the Wisdom, the Son of God, and of grace; but He is not so of Himself.

(2) The characteristic formula was, "There was when the Son was not"; that is, He is a finite being, a creature, a derived being, not eternally pre-existent.

(3) In the historical Christ the human element is merely the material aspect, while the soul is the Logos. The historical Christ therefore had no human soul, and was finite and imperfect.

(4) But, although the incarnate Logos is finite, He was made the instrument in creation, and is to be worshiped and exalted above all other creatures, as the Creator and Governor of the universe, and the Redeemer of man.

3. THE ATHANASIAN VIEW EPITOMIZED.—The champions of the Athanasian view were driven to state their concept of the relations of the Godhead in answer to the assertions of the Arians. They were compelled to repudiate the subordinate

position given by Arius to the Son, and to affirm the absolute and eternal deity of the historical Christ. The ATHANASIAN VIEW of Christ embraced the following:

(1) As God is unchangeable, there never was a time when the Son was not with the Father. The distinction between Father and Son is therefore an *eternal* distinction.

(2) The Son is *identical in substance* (or being) with the Father. His deity is identical with the deity of the Father. Athanasius consequently rejected the Platonic exaltation of God above all relations to the universe, held by Arius and Origen. Creation was the work of the Son, but not because it was beneath the dignity of the Father. Athanasius held that in denying the absolute deity of Christ, the possibility of the union of God with man was denied. If Christ is not truly and freely God, there is no true redemption for man.

(3) Athanasius emphasized the *personality* of the Son just as much as His identity of essence with the Father. The Son is not a mere attribute or mode of manifestation of the Father, but an independent personal subsistence. His was not a derived life. Yet Athanasius would not allow anything that involved a partition of the divine essence. This had been illustrated by the relation of light and its reflection, in this way subordinating the Son to the Father. Athanasius stressed the sameness of essence and the distinction of personality of Father and Son. That discloses the soundness and the stature of Athanasius on the question of the Godhead.

4. THE SEMI-ARIAN OR EUSEBIAN CONCEPT.—On the other hand the *Semi-Arian*, or *Eusebian*, party sought to mediate between the other two. Such rejected the Arian view that the Son was created out of nothing, hence was different in essence from the Father, and denied that there was a time "when the Son was not." They likewise rejected the idea that the Son is a creature, or was "born" in the sense that other beings are born.

They, on the other hand, declared that the Son was begotten of the Father *before all time*, God of God, entire of

entire, perfect of the perfect, image of the Deity, the essence, the will, the power, and the glory of the Father. But they denied the Athanasian *sameness* of essence, holding only to *likeness* as to essence.

5. TIDE OF BATTLE ENDS IN ATHANASIAN VICTORY.—The issue came to a head at the Nicene Council of 325. As noted, the main object of this council was to settle the far-flung Arian controversy that threatened the unity of Christianity. There were now three parties in the controversy. At the opening of the council the Arians proposed a creed, signed by eighteen names. This was indignantly rejected, and as a consequence all but three abandoned the Arian cause.

Eusebius then proposed an ancient Palestinian formula. The Arians were willing to subscribe to it, but the Athanasians wanted to change the creed to which the Arians must subscribe. They insisted on the term "*identical in substance.*" The Nicene Creed in its present form was then proposed. The emperor, awed by the personality of Athanasius, cast in his lot with the Athanasian party, and finally the Semi-Arians reluctantly subscribed. Arius and the two Egyptian bishops who refused to sign it were banished.

However, in time Arius was restored to office. And in 335 an Arian Synod, convoked at Tyre, now condemned the Athanasian party, and Athanasius was banished to Treves. But when the empire was divided after the death of Constantine in 337, Constantius in the East was an Arian, while Constantine II in the West was an adherent of the Nicene Creed, and restored Athanasius.

Thus the tide of battle over the creeds, involving the Godhead, swung back and forth—the Western Church being predominantly Nicean, and the Eastern predominantly Arian. Finally the Athanasian party prevailed, and Athanasianism became victorious. With this sketch of the man and the issues, we are now ready to consider Athanasius, and then his writings, in greater detail.

III. Athanasius—Powerful Defender of Deity of Christ

ATHANASIUS (c. 297-373), bishop of Alexandria and most prominent theologian of the fourth century, is commonly called the "defender of orthodoxy," because of his conspicuous championship of the eternal deity of Christ in the battle over the Godhead, as against the prolonged attacks of Arianism.

1. THE CENTER OF THE THEOLOGICAL WORLD.—Athanasius' childhood spanned the terrible Diocletian persecution, 303-313. He was highly trained in the famous schools of Alexandria, and was well acquainted with the Platonic philosophy, and the various other systems, along with the tenets of Judaism. He was a young deacon under Bishop Alexander when the Arian controversy arose about 320. And he was presbyter of the Alexandria Church at the time of the first general Council of Nicea (325), where he became the chief defender of the Trinitarian doctrine, as against the heresy of Arianism.

In 328 the dying Bishop Alexander recommended that Athanasius be his successor. Accordingly, Athanasius was made not only bishop of Alexandria in 328 but metropolitan of all Egypt and Libya, and Pentapolis as well—the highest ecclesiastical dignity in the East. To him more than any other individual is due the triumph of Trinitarianism.² His life has been described as "an epic of heroism, fortitude, and faith." Forty-six years a bishop, he was the center of the *theological* world as Constantine was of the *political* realm—both bearing the title "the Great," in their respective spheres. That was his stature.

2. FOUR TIMES BANISHED IN STORMY CAREER.—For years prior to Nicea there had been theological controversy in Egypt over the contentions of Arianism. And now Athanasius' posi-

² The so-called "Athanasian Creed" was not, however, the work of Athanasius but was a later creation.



HARRY ANDERSON, ARTIST

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Athanasius Presented the Eternal Christ as Creator, Redeemer, Source of Immortality, and Upholder of the Moral Law.

tion on the coeternity and coequality of the Father and the Son had brought the issue to a head at Nicea. The overwhelming majority voted against Arius, who was deposed and banished. But politics mingled with theology at Nicea, each side seeking to win imperial favor.

Later, reaction against the decisions of Nicea restored Arius. But Athanasius, who had incurred Arian hatred, was four times banished from his church by Arian emperors and once by Julian the Apostate—spending more than twenty years in exile. Five times in his stormy career he returned to his church, spending his last years still defending “orthodoxy” and opposing “heresy.” He was thus the outstanding obstacle to the triumph of Arianism in the East. He also upheld the

deity of the Holy Spirit. He conspicuously maintained that, at the Incarnation, God Himself entered into humanity. Such was his eminence.

3. CHAMPIONED CERTAIN ASPECTS OF CONDITIONALISM.—But he also championed certain aspects of Conditionalism, contending that “securing immortality” is the aim of the soul—and that position was taken in the very city where the allegorizing Philo of the Jews (c. 20 B.C.-c. A.D. 50) had lived, and where the Neoplatonic Origen (d. c. 254) had held forth as powerful head of the Catechetical School a century and a quarter prior. But Athanasius’ voice faltered somewhat at this point, and he fluctuated in his witness. Nevertheless, he held firmly to the second coming of Christ to raise the dead and establish His kingdom. These points will be noted shortly.

In his *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* (“On the Incarnation of the Word”) Athanasius expounds how God the Word (Logos) by His union with human manhood restores to fallen man the image of God, in which he had been created. And by His death and resurrection He met and overcame death and the consequences of sin. It is a powerful presentation as we shall now see.

IV. “The Incarnation” in Relation to Man’s Sin and Redemption

1. CLASSIC PORTRAYAL OF RESTORATION OF MAN’S LIFE.—Let us now range through Athanasius’ *The Incarnation*, written while he was still in his twenties—an exploit similar to that of Calvin and his *Institutes*. Here in *The Incarnation* we find depicted the relation of the Infinite Son of God to the lost sons of man. Here is revealed Athanasius’ clear concept of the hopeless condition of man, lost through sin but paralleled by the wondrous provisions of redemption. And this is all portrayed in the setting of the sublime deity of Christ and His incarnation for the purpose of dying in our stead and rising for our restoration. Finally, Athanasius’ comprehension

of the prophetic phase—the inspired predictions of Christ's earthly life and the timing of His death, together with His second advent to consummate the redemption—is similarly presented with appealing clarity.

Athanasius' grasp of man's need and of the provision of a Saviour is most impressive. The treatise is a classic portrayal of the restoration of man. It is really the most ancient work on Christian dogmatics available, and is actually a Christian philosophy of the Godhead. While he was not always an out-and-out Conditionalist, Athanasius nevertheless presents, in this setting, certain distinctive Conditionalist teachings and their underlying principles. That is why it is of concern to us in compassing this grave transition hour, when Conditionalism was steadily passing from the picture.

2. DIRECT QUOTATIONS NOT EMPLOYED WITH ATHANASIOUS.

—Athanasius is not cited here because he made any new or special contribution to Conditionalism, but to show that a scholar of his eminence still held at that critical time—despite the growing pressures and the strong swing away from Conditionalism—to certain general underlying principles. Athanasius was virtually the last man of prominence so to do before the portentous blackout that lasted for centuries. However, his learned writings, in the characteristic manner of the time, are so prolix and involved as to require large paragraphs of direct quotation, were such to be used. But that would prove tedious and boring to the modern reader, and might be laid aside. That would defeat the very purpose of such citations.

We have therefore given accurate summarizations of Athanasius' lengthy arguments and expressions of belief. In doing so, recourse has been had to the official analytical summations of each section appearing at the beginning of each section, prepared by Bishop Archibald Robertson, then of the University of Durham and later of Oxford. These faithfully set forth Athanasius' presentation in condensed form. Hence no direct quotes are used. But the thought has been trustworth-

ily preserved. That is all that is essential for our purpose here.

Athanasius is not clear, forceful, or full on the nature of man, as were some that came before him. He is contradictory and confused in spots on this question. His principal burden is to preserve the great truth and reality of the complete deity of Christ, and related eternal verities. This he did most remarkably. And in so doing he upheld the fundamental principles of the redemption of lost man.

The translation is from the standard Schaff and Wace rendering in the *Post-Nicene Fathers*, volume four. Now let us fill in the picture with rapid strokes.

3. MAN NOT CREATED WITH PERVERSE TENDENCIES.—Athanasius' Introduction (in sections 1 to 3) begins with the doctrine of creation by the Word, and man's allotted place, followed by the abuse of his high privileges and resultant loss. It portrays how the Father has saved the world by Him through whom He first made it.³ The creation was out of nothing. And, be it particularly noted, with man created above the rest, but incapable of independent perseverance.⁴

As it was by the Word that man was called from non-existence into being, so by the one fault which forfeited that life he incurred corruption.⁵ Having thus incurred ruin, man of himself must sink back into destruction.⁶ Only the original Bestower of life, Athanasius held, could now rescue him and restore life.

4. CREATOR MUST BOTH RENEW AND RESTORE.—Athanasius presses the point that, having incurred corruption, none could renew but He who had created man. The Son alone could re-create, suffer for all, and represent all to the Father.⁷ So the Word visited this earth and took a body of our nature, and that of a virgin.⁸ He took a mortal body, capable of death, uniting it with His deity, that He might stay the corruption

³ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, sec. 1, in *NPNF*, 2d series, vol. 4, p. 36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 3, p. 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, secs. 4, 5, p. 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 6, p. 39.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 7, p. 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*, sec. 8, p. 40.

of the race. Becoming one with us He clothed us with immortality⁹ as a result. Created in the "image" of God, man had fallen away from God.¹⁰ So God restored in us the grace of His image.

5. BECAME MAN TO RESTORE LIFE TO US.—Athanasius tells how a portrait once effaced must be restored from the original. Thus the Son of the Father came to seek, save, and regenerate. And, Athanasius asserts, the Word alone could do so.¹¹ So He condescends to take a "body."¹² And by His becoming Man, the Saviour put away death from us, renewing us again.¹³ Bishop Robertson well summarizes section twenty thus concerning Christ:

*"None, then, could bestow incorruption, but He Who had made, none restore the likeness of God, save His Own Image, none quicken, but the Life, none teach, but the Word. And He, to pay our debt of death, must also die for us, and rise again as our first-fruits from the grave. Mortal therefore His [Christ's] body must be; corruptible, His Body could not be."*¹⁴

So death was brought to nought by the death of Christ.¹⁵

6. PURPOSE OF PUBLIC DEATH AND THREE DAYS IN TOMB.—Continuing, the Son came to receive the death due to others. He paid the debt, dying in our stead, so as to rise again as the first fruits. That is why Christian martyrs have contempt for death. Moreover, His death must be certain in order to guarantee the truth of His resurrection.¹⁶ That necessitated a public death.¹⁷ He died on the cross to bear the "curse" for us, quoting Deuteronomy 21:23. But He held out His hands to us, thus clearing the way to Heaven and opening for us the everlasting doors.¹⁸

The cross, once the instrument of shame, now became the trophy of victory. He rose not till the "Third Day," so the reality of His death could not be denied. And not later, so to

⁹ *Ibid.*, sec. 9, p. 40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 11, p. 42.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, secs. 13, 14, p. 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, sec. 15, p. 44.

¹³ *Ibid.*, sec. 16, p. 45.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, sec. 21, p. 47.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 22, p. 48.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 23, p. 48.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, sec. 25, p. 49.

guard the identity of His body, or not to keep His disciples too long in "suspense," or to wait till the witnesses were dispersed.¹⁹ The reality of the Resurrection is proved by the facts.²⁰ Christ's triumph over the grave changed the relevancy of death and life. It involved a momentous train of consequences.

7. PROPHECIES ESTABLISH FACTS OF INCARNATION.—Athanasius then turns to the prophecies, recorded in Holy Writ, showing how the Jews, in their inveterate obstinacy, were confounded by their own Scriptures—by the prophecies of Christ's coming as God and Man.²¹ Athanasius first notes the prophecies of His passion and death in all its circumstances.²² Next were the prophecies of the "Cross," and how they are all fulfilled in Christ alone.²³ Then came prophecies of Christ's sovereignty, flight into Egypt, et cetera.²⁴ And in Psalm 22 appears the majesty of His birth and death.²⁵ Therein is disclosed His unimpeachable power and Godhead. Moreover, they were not to "look for another," for Daniel in the prophecy of the seventy weeks, foretells the exact time of His death.²⁶

8. ANSWERS SCOFFING OF GREEKS REGARDING INCARNATION.—Answering the frivolous cynicism and scoffing of the Greeks, Athanasius says that Christ's union with the body is based upon His relation to Creation as a whole. Since man alone departed from the order of His creation, it was *man's* nature that the Word united to Himself, thus repairing the breach between the creature and the Creator at the very point where the rupture had occurred. He used a "human body," since it was to man that He wished to reveal Himself.²⁷ He came to save, and man alone of all earthly creatures had sinned.²⁸

He could not save man by a "mere fiat," as when He produced man out of nothing. A bare command would not suffice.²⁹ He came and lived and worked among them as man.³⁰ Further, creation out of nothing is different from reparation

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sec. 26, p. 50.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 30, p. 52.

²¹ *Ibid.*, sec. 33, p. 54.

²² *Ibid.*, sec. 34.

²³ *Ibid.*, sec. 35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 36, p. 55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, sec. 37.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 39, p. 57.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 42, p. 59.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, sec. 43.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, sec. 44, p. 60.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 43, p. 59.

of what already exists. Man had a definite need, calling for a definite remedy. Death was ingrained in man's nature, and the Word must meet and conquer death in His usurped territory.³¹ He met the specific disorder with a specific remedy, overcoming death with life. This point is so vital that we quote a paragraph from Athanasius' own text:

"For this cause the Saviour reasonably put on Him a body, in order that the body, becoming wound closely to the Life, should no longer, as mortal, abide in death, but, as having put on immortality, should thenceforth rise again and remain immortal. For, once it had put on corruption, it could not have risen again unless it had put on life. And death likewise could not, from its very nature, appear, save in the body. Therefore He put on a body, that He might find death in the body, and blot it out. For how could the Lord have been proved at all to be the Life, had He not quickened what was mortal?"³²

9. SO LIVE AS TO EAT OF TREE OF LIFE.—Finally, Athanasius urges all to search the Scriptures and fill in this "outline." He closes with a portrayal of the Second Advent, direct from Heaven, in power and glory. And he tells us that we will learn about His second glorious and truly divine appearing to us, in His own glory—no longer in humble guise, but in His own magnificence.³³ He will then execute judgment on the wrongdoer. Athanasius closes, in section 57, with an admonition to so live that you may have the right to eat of this tree of knowledge and life, and so come to eternal joys.³⁴

Quoting again from the text, Athanasius urges that the reader—

"may escape the peril of the sinners and their fire at the day of judgment, and receive what is laid up for the saints in the kingdom of heaven."³⁵

That is Athanasius' view of the vicarious, atoning death of Christ on the cross, in its relation to the redemption of man and his resurrection and future life. It reveals a magnificent grasp of the over-all issues and a continuity of treatment that was unsurpassed in his day. On the actual nature

³¹ *Ibid.*, sec. 44, p. 60.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 61.

³³ *Ibid.*, sec. 56, p. 66.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 57, p. 67.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

and destiny of man Athanasius was at times self-contradictory.³⁰ It was a transition hour. He sometimes reproduces some of the very thoughts and phrases of Plato that were openly employed by Athanagoras and Tertullian. But he did not follow with them to their conclusions. He passed over the final destruction. And the semi-Conditionalism he voiced was, ere long, drowned out in the swirling tide of Platonism, which in time swept over Christendom. But his was a retarding voice that was heard, and was respected in his day.

³⁰ Athanasius was an avowed Immortal-Soulist when he was twenty-one, at the time he wrote his first book, *Contra Gentes* ("Against the Heathen"), about A.D. 318, and thus seven years before the Council of Nicea in 325. (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Prolegomena, p. LXXXVI; Introduction, p. 1.) At that time Athanasius expressly declared the soul to be immortal (sec. 33, p. 21), with power to continue life outside of the body after death (*ibid.*). But even in this treatise Athanasius says, in his closing paragraph, "Immortality and the kingdom of heaven is the fruit of faith and devotion towards Him [God], if only the soul be adorned according to His laws"—and refers to the "prize" of "life everlasting" (sec. 47, p. 30).

Augustine—Immortal-Soulism's Hour of Supremacy

I. Projects Fallacious Philosophy of History

We close this group survey of post-Nicene personalities with a relatively brief comment on AUGUSTINE, one of the admittedly great intellects of the centuries. His life marks the transition hour between the developing theology of the Post-Nicene Church witnesses and the long period of the Middle Ages when dogma had become fixed, with no freedom of mind allowed outside the rigid confines of the Catholic ecclesiastical system. And this included pre-eminently the nature and destiny of man.

1. "INFALLIBLE" SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE BASED ON AUTHORITY.—It is well, before continuing, to note that the Roman mind was by nature of a legal turn, with God conceived of as a stern lawgiver and judge, holding man to obedience through pain of punishment. Augustine really held that man comes to Christ under the influence of fear. Man must therefore have a *mediator*. And this, he held, was the function of the church. Therefore salvation operates within the custody of the church.

The thought of a church with an infallible system of doctrine, based upon authority, intrigued him. Thus it was that Augustine the philosopher became Augustine the theologian, with this concept as foundational. His view of the church is formulated in his famous treatise, the *City of God*, which is



Under Augustine of Hippo the Eternal-Torment Postulate Developed by Tertullian Was Fastened Upon Catholic Christendom.

the most elaborate, and enticing, philosophy of history ever attempted. To him all history is a conflict between the earthly "city," or community, belonging to the children of the world, and the "City of God," the church—an imposing drama ending in the final victory of the church.

2. BASIC FALLACIES OF AUGUSTINIAN CONCEPTS.—Augustine, in this crucial century, was now the most powerful and influential exponent of universal Innate Immortality, and the indestructibility of the human soul. His was an extension and

augmentation of Tertullianism. But his fundamental view was based on a contradiction—that “*death*” means *endless life*. He confused “eternal loss” of life with an “eternal life of loss,” as aptly phrased. Remove that contention and the Augustinian structure falls. Nevertheless, the influence of Augustine was strong enough to secure the prevalence for centuries of the doctrine of the universal, indefeasible immortality of all men, and the consequent eternal life of the sinner in endless, agonizing misery.

However, the most serious error of Augustine’s theory was that evil for a *time* and evil for *eternity* are essentially one and the same. He thereby flouted the scriptural distinction between time and eternity. God permits the triumph of evil for a determined duration, then He will cause it to cease forever. Evil is but transitory and temporary, in contrast with Augustine’s enduring and eternal continuation theory, which stemmed back to Persian dualism. Time is a relatively brief period between the two eternities of the past and the future—with the triumph of good as the final end and goal. And in that future age that will have no end there will be no reprobates. In contrast, Origen had restored them all to Heaven; while Augustine held the wicked perpetually in Hell. But the influence of Augustine prevailed over that of Origen. That molded the course of history.

3. ALREADY COMMITTED TO IMMORTAL-SOULISM BEFORE CONVERSION.—It was the powerful advocacy by Augustine of the doctrine of the indefeasible immortality of the soul and its “logical consequent,” the doctrine of Eternal Torment in hell-fire, that won general acceptance in the Medieval Church, becoming the dominant view for a thousand years. But it should be noted that in this Augustine simply brought with him into Christianity the speculations of Greek philosophy that he had adopted in his pre-Christian days.

It is also well to remember that, before his conversion to Christianity, Augustine had written a book giving sixteen

reasons for the immortality of the soul. So he was already committed to this pagan postulate *before* he became a Christian. Christian Neoplatonism simply formed the bridge. In Augustine, Immortal-Soulism reached the high-water mark of post-Nicene times. Now observe his personal life.

II. Augustine Sets Immortal-Soulist Pattern for Thousand Years

Fiery AUGUSTINE (Aurelius Augustinus) (A.D. 354-430), most illustrious of the Latin Fathers, doctor of the church and bishop of Hippo, was born in Numidia, North Africa. His mother was a Christian, but his father a pagan. After a thorough education at Madaura and Carthage, including philosophy, Augustine became a teacher of rhetoric in Rome, and then Milan. From adherence to Neoplatonism he was converted to Christianity under Ambrose of Milan. He then broke with the world of his profession, spending three years in intensive study. Four years after he was made a presbyter he was chosen bishop of Hippo, continuing as such for thirty-five years, and was the founder of the Augustinian order. His influence on theology was immense, particularly up to the thirteenth century. (On Augustine's timing see Chart F, p. 759.)

Augustine's life was cast in a transition hour—the sacking of Rome by the Goths, occurring in the midst of his episcopate. Rome's fall, after eleven centuries of triumphant progress, led many to believe the end of the world to be at hand. Roman civilization was being swept away under the flood of barbarian advance. And churchly thought was crystallizing and hardening. Augustine died in the midst of the Vandal invasion and the siege of Hippo.

1. PROJECTS NEW PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.—As noted, Augustine created a new philosophy of history through his monumental theodicy, *De Civitate Dei* ("The City of God"), portraying the triumph and restoration of the "City of God" over the city of the world, which latter he held was doomed to



Such Schoolmen of the Middle Ages as Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus Help Finish the Eternal-Torment and Purgatory Fabrications.

destruction. Thirteen years were consumed in the writing. As stated, this set forth a new concept of history—two antagonistic governments, the realm of God and that of the devil. Through this portrayal he attempted to explain, through a revolutionary principle of interpretation, the history of God and the church in the world.

Augustine was a combination of pronounced opposites. His clear position on sin and grace came nearest of all the Fathers to the position of Evangelical Protestantism, later profoundly influencing Luther. At first an advocate of religious liberty and of purely spiritual means of opposing error, Augustine later turned to the fatal principle of forcible coercion and civil persecution, misusing the directive, "Compel them to come in," to suppress the Donatists.

2. EVERYTHING THAT CONFLICTS INTERPRETED SPIRITUALLY.—Repelled by the literal interpretation of Scripture, Augustine caught up the Philonic and rabbinical rule that everything that appears inconsistent with church "orthodoxy" must be interpreted spiritually or mystically. And his acceptance of the Tichonian rules of interpretation led to a system that totally blurred the original sense. Under Augustine the allegorical meaning degenerated into an alternative device for supporting ecclesiasticism, and the Bible was emptied of significance. It must, he held, always be interpreted with reference

to church "orthodoxy." Thus it was that Augustinianism came largely to mold the eschatological opinions of Christendom for a thousand years.

3. REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION.—His theory of the spiritual, allegorical "first resurrection" lies at the foundation of the Augustinian structure—the resurrection of dead souls from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. As to the millennium, he held the thousand years to be a figurative numeral, expressive of the whole period till the end—a round number for an indeterminate time. But the crux of Augustine's argument is that he begins the millennium from Christ's *first* advent, and spans the period between the first and second advents. They were already living, he held, in the midst of it. And the "stone" (Christ) that smites the image of the nations was becoming a churchly "mountain," forcibly filling the whole earth and bringing all peoples into submission to Christ.¹ It was a militant concept. It changed the whole course of theological thought.

So in the fifth century the influence of Augustine was powerful enough to secure the dominance for centuries—particularly in the West—of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, and the consequent eternal life of the sinner in endless misery. Augustine once asked, "What simple and illiterate man or obscure woman that does not believe the immortality of the soul and a future life?"² By now it was well-nigh universal. But common consent is unsound if in conflict with the Word.

The pattern was fixed. The dogma of Immortal-Soulism was firmly fastened upon Christianity. "Orthodoxy" prevailed—and prevailed with a vengeance. For hundreds of years only sporadic voices of dissent were heard. But a change would come, as we shall see later, in volume two.

¹ For the complete evidence on Augustinian interpretation, see L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 1, pp. 473-491.

² See Augustine, Epistle 137, chap. 3.



Under Justinian in A.D. 529 the Pagan Teachings of World-Soul, Emanation, Restorationism, Dualism, and Mysticism Were Forbidden.

III. The Fatal Fallacy of Majority "Orthodoxy"

We have just noted how the "orthodoxy" of Augustine triumphed, becoming ensconced in a controlling position for centuries. But it is also to be remembered that the invoking of the authority and prestige of "orthodoxy" is merely appealing to *human* authority, and the dubious weight of majority view. Such a precarious basis of faith is obviously unsound.

History tragically attests that majorities are frequently wrong. Seventeenth-century Anglican William Chillingworth uttered a truism when he said, "The Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants," and is the sole foundation of all *true* "orthodoxy." That was Luther's platform, and Tyndale's. It was the affirmation of the Protestant princes at the Protest of Spires—and has been of all subsequent sound evangelical Protestants. That is the position maintained throughout this present work.

1. BIBLICAL TRUTH IS RECOGNIZED IN TIME.—Human-majority authority is but shifting sand, as the "orthodoxy" of one generation often comes to be recognized as the "heresy" of a succeeding age—or vice versa. The wholesome dissentients

of the centuries—the Waldenses, Wycliffites, Hussites, Lutherans, Reformed, Baptists, Pietists, Wesleyans—were each, in their day of initial witness, condemned by their contemporaries as heretical, or at least as heterodox. But each had a sound Biblical principle to champion, which in time came to be widely recognized as actually “orthodox.”

These champions of Conditionalism that we are tracing across the centuries considered themselves as similarly standing in the line of such dissentients, with a profound conviction that the views they held on the nature and destiny of man, though criticized and condemned by many of their contemporaries as “heretical” or “heterodox,” would ultimately come to be recognized as acceptable—or at least as one of the alternative acceptable views, both of which would be regarded as Christian, without incurring the opprobrious epithets of “heretical” or “heterodox.”

2. ORTHODOXY DETERMINED BY WRITTEN WORD.—True orthodoxy is right thinking about Christian truth. And no thinking can be truly right that is not in accordance with the Written Word. Moreover, “orthodoxy” has usually been relative, and therefore defective—determined by men’s partial knowledge of the truth. The Pharisees in Christ’s day claimed to be pre-eminently “orthodox,” and in their smug complacency condemned the Saviour of the world—the Personification of Truth. The Greek Catholic Church incorporates the term “Orthodox” into her name. And the Roman Catholic Church imperiously insists that she alone is orthodox. Obviously, not all such assumptions can be right.

In Protestantism, Lutheran scholars claimed adherence to pure doctrine, and in the name of orthodoxy made war upon the vital piety of seventeenth-century Spener and the Pietists. And in the name of orthodoxy Reformed scholastics divided the church into hostile camps. Orthodoxy assumes to pre-empt the truth, and is unwilling to learn or concede. All too often it is haughty and arrogant, assuming the divine prerogatives

of infallibility and inerrancy—and all too commonly hating all truth with which it is unfamiliar.

Nevertheless, the "orthodoxy" of Augustine's Immortal-Soulism and Eternal Torment was destined to prevail for a thousand years. Error was entrenched and riding high. All opposers were under the ban and were largely driven underground—to the caves, the secluded valleys, the mountain fastnesses, to distant lands. They were compelled to use guerilla tactics to keep the Conditionalist truth alive. But inspiring epics were to follow, in Reformation and Post-Reformation times, in the unremitting conflict over life, death, and destiny.

3. TRUTH CRUSHED TO EARTH SPRINGS FORTH AGAIN.—After the lengthening shades of night had fallen, and deepest midnight with its oppressive silences had come, the early glow of a new day pierces the darkness. Brighter and brighter it becomes, until the full orb of noontide reveals far more than a mere restoration of the interrupted testimony of Conditionalist witnesses. Mounting in number and of imposing prominence, a growing group of stalwart champions brings the testimony of Conditionalism to the forefront as never before, first in the Old World and then in the New—and out to the ends of the earth. And they advance in their understanding of the truth.

Truth on the nature and destiny of man, crushed to earth, was bound to rise again. And rise it did. Despite the crushing dominance of the Tertullian-Augustinian School throughout the medieval centuries, men of sound training and powerful conviction began to speak forth again. The testimony of the Conditionalist School was once more heard in ever-growing voice—though at first under sharp ridicule and duress. Strong men sometimes went to prison for their faith—and, in instances, even to death. But that too would pass.

Truth could not forever be repressed, and its advocates bore their witness in ever-increasing numbers and ever-widening circles. The virile seeds of Conditionalism, planted during the ante-Nicene days of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus

and the post-Nicene times of Arnobius and Lactantius, sprang forth and yielded their destined harvest. With this brief preview of things to come, we close this volume. The story of the subsequent centuries is the theme and scope of volume two.

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

Relation Between Late Jewish Literature and Early Christian Fathers

(I am indebted to Dr. Earle Hilgert, professor of New Testament, of Andrews University, for suggesting this important connecting link, or bridge, between the later inter-Testament writings of the Jews and the earliest patristic Christian writings of the second century A.D. It is based upon the most recent findings, and sheds valuable light on these relationships. It was specifically prepared by Dr. Hilgert for insertion here.—L. E. F.)

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, new light has been shed on the relation of certain patristic writings of the second century A.D. to the writings of late Judaism appearing shortly before the Christian Era. Preliminary work in this direction was done as early as 1930 by Dr. Oscar Cullmann,¹ then of Strasbourg, who saw in the "Preaching of Peter" (the earliest stratum of material in the Pseudo-Clementine literature), a Jewish-Christian document, the roots of which could be traced to a kind of Jewish Gnosticism. H. J. Schoeps,² writing in 1948, concluded that the Ebionites (a Jewish-Christian group in the second century A.D. who recognized Jesus as prophet or Messiah but not as Son of God) had grown out of the Essenes.

In 1952 and 1953, after the publication of the first of the Dead Sea scrolls, the Dominican scholar Jean-Paul Audet³ demonstrated a number of important parallels between the *Manual of Discipline* from Qumrân, on the one hand, and the early Christian *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didache*, the *Doctrina XIII. Apostolorum*,⁴ and the *Shepherd of Hermas* on the other. Audet concluded that all of these early Christian writers ultimately derived important features of their thought and expression from the *Manual of Discipline*. Also in 1953, M. de Jonge published a study of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁵

This work, hitherto generally considered to be a pre-Christian Jewish document with Christian interpolation, was re-evaluated by De Jonge as Jewish-Christian, and dated in the second century. Subsequently a number of scholars have agreed with this conclusion,⁶ particularly inasmuch

¹ *Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-clémentin. Étude sur le rapport entre le gnosticisme et le judéo-christianisme*, Paris, 1930.

² *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums*, Tübingen, 1949.

³ "Affinités littéraires et doctrinales du 'Manuel de Discipline.'" *Revue Biblique*, 59 (1952), 219-238; 60 (1953), 41-82.

⁴ Published by J. Schlecht, Freiburg i. B., 1900.

⁵ *The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*, Assen, 1953.

⁶ J. T. Millik in *Revue Biblique*, 62 (1955), p. 298; J. Daniélou, *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme*, Tournai, 1958, p. 24. However, dissenting views have been expressed by K. G. Kuhn, "Die beiden Messias Aarons und Israels," *New Testament Studies* 1 (1955), pp. 171ff.; and A. S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumrân*, Assen, 1957, p. 215. De Jonge has since modified his view, holding that while the *Testaments* may be originally Jewish, they "underwent at any rate a thoroughgoing Christian redaction" ("Christian

as a Testament of Levi in Aramaic and a Testament of Naphtali in Hebrew have been discovered at Qumrân—documents that appear to be the basis for the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* as they now stand. Thus another connection between the Dead Sea scrolls and the Christian literature of the second century seems to have been discovered.

In 1954 Leonhard Goppelt published a study of the relations between Judaism and early Christianity,⁷ in which he pointed out that Christianity, until the middle of the second century, remained essentially Jewish in its structure. This does not necessarily mean "Jewish" in the sense of the extreme legalism with which Paul contended, but Jewish in the larger sense that the Christian Church of this period continued to express itself in Jewish thought forms.⁸ Goppelt notes, for instance, that both 1 and 2 Clement, and Hermas, sense no real break with Judaism; their view of Christianity is not that it has come out of Judaism; rather, they see the church as made up of the righteous both before and after Christ, so that *Christianity is a continuance of Judaism*.⁹

In the same year Cullmann brought his previous study up to date in the light of the Dead Sea discoveries by proposing that the Qumrân sect must have been absorbed into the type of Jewish Christianity represented in the Pseudo-Clementine literature.¹⁰

Most recently the French Jesuit scholar Jean Daniélou has published a full-scale theology of Jewish Christianity.¹¹ Here he recognizes a number of works as Jewish-Christian which were thought in the past to be late Jewish: 2 ("Slavonic") *Enoch*, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the *Ascension of Isaiah*. He notes that each of these is closely related to an authentically Jewish work—2 *Enoch* to 1 ("Ethiopic") *Enoch* (parts of which have been found at Qumrân), the *Testaments to Jubilees* (also found at Qumrân), and the *Ascension* to the stories of the martyrdoms of the prophets.¹² Daniélou also identifies virtually all of the Christian writers before A.D. 150 as Jewish-Christian: 1 *Clement*, *Barnabas*, *Didache*, *Ignatius*, *Hermas*, as well as the Pseudo-Clementine literature and a number of apocryphal gospels.

All of this evidence suggests a new evaluation of the importance of Jewish-Christianity in early Christian history. The Church Fathers of the first half of the second century stood in close relationship to, and often under the influence of, late Jewish literature and thought patterns. The lines of rapport between them and the Dead Sea scrolls appear to be especially marked.

In view of these apparent relationships, the fact that essentially

Influence in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *Novum Testamentum* 4 (1960), p. 197; see also his "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the New Testament," in K. Aland et al., eds., *Studia Evangelica*, Berlin, 1958).

⁷ *Christentum und Judentum im ersten und zweiten Jahrhundert*, Gütersloh, 1954.

⁸ Just how broad "Judaism" of this period could become has been amply demonstrated by E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 6 vols., New York, 1953 ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹⁰ "Die neuentdeckten Qumrantexte und das Judentum der Pseudoklementinen," *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann*, Berlin, 1954, pp. 35f.

¹¹ Daniélou, *op. cit.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

the same view in regard to the nonimmortality of the soul occurs in a number of late Jewish works, including the Dead Sea scrolls, and in the Apostolic Fathers, would seem to have added significance. It would, of course, be too much to claim that this view was characteristic of all Jewish-Christian thought, as we have seen, for instance, that the *Pseudo-Clementines* and "*Slavonic*" *Enoch* look upon the question otherwise. Jewish-Christianity appears to have been no more unanimous in this regard than was Judaism. But the general trend of Jewish-Christian thought seems to have been toward the view that the soul was merely mortal. This fact may indicate one more link between the Apostolic Fathers and late Judaism, and more particularly with the Dead Sea scrolls.

EARLE HILGERT

APPENDIX B

Contention of Irenaeus' Two Apparent Contradictions Collapses

Some tenaciously claim that Irenaeus, in two instances in his five-book Treatise, teaches the inherent immortality of the soul. But we believe that this contention is not valid, and reject the claim for the following reasons:

FIRST, doubt can justly be thrown upon the accuracy of some of the translated phrases (from Greek to Latin, then from Latin to English), the Latin translation being made at a period when the Augustinian thesis was dominant in the church. Bishop A. C. Coxe, reviser of the English translation, who furnished the Introduction and Notes for the standard Roberts and Donaldson *ANF* translation, quotes the translators as saying that the exact meaning of the text, both Latin and Greek, is often "most uncertain"; and that one of the "difficulties throughout, has been to fix the reading we should adopt." Irenaeus' style is often "involved and prolix."¹ And the translators even state that some of Irenaeus' discussions may "seem almost unintelligible to the English reader," and "scarcely more comprehensible to those who have pondered long on the original."

It is consequently obvious that too much reliance cannot be placed on the technical wording of these two particular passages that appear to be in conflict with the rest. Dependence must be placed rather on the complete, cumulative testimony of Irenaeus on the subject—the total evidence. Only that can be determinative.

SECOND, it is illogical and unscholarly to insist that *two isolated expressions*, at least so translated, apparently affirming unconditional immortality, should nullify *two score of positive statements*, consisting of several distinct and complete lines of evidence, cumulatively establishing Condi-

¹ A. Cleveland Coxe, Introductory Note to Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 311, 312.

tional Immortality as his preponderant position. From the massed evidence we have just examined, it is obvious that Irenaeus emphatically did *not* believe that man has a never-dying soul, despite the reluctance of some to concede the facts. Dean Farrar rightly says, concerning Irenaeus' testimony, "The sense of twelve, or any number of vague passages is to be explained by one definite passage; not it by them."²

THIRD, inasmuch as Irenaeus, with great fullness, frequency, and varied forms of expression, taught that man is *not* innately and indefeasibly immortal according to divine purpose, would it not be amazing if in the five parts of the one single treatise Bishop Irenaeus should, with the same pen, maintain that the wicked were *doomed to everlasting suffering*—when he had already repeatedly declared that such were *cut off from any chance of everlasting existence*? Yet this is what some claim for him. But we affirm that, against these two most dubious expressions, there is a multiplicity of determinative evidence to the contrary.

FOURTH, the dating of his treatise makes the contention most unlikely that Irenaeus in Gaul would have declared the soul to be immortal. As noted, his treatise was evidently written soon after A.D. 180, and not later than 188. But such a declaration on Immortal-Soulism, at that time, *would have made him the pioneer herald of a revolutionary concept of the soul that had not yet been publicly set forth*. It was not until Athenagoras of Athens (190), Clement of Alexandria (220), Minucius Felix of Africa (220), and especially Tertullian of Carthage (240), that this concept was brought into being in *Christian ranks*.

1. FIRST CASE COLLAPSES UNDER SCRUTINY.—Note the two passages in the *ANF* translation. Both are in book five. The first is directed against the Gnostic contention that the Demiurge had not the power to bestow immortality. And in the context Irenaeus remarks that things which are by nature immortal need no kindly help in order to live forever. The first perplexing passage is in chapter four, which opens with reference to—

"those persons [Gnostics] who feign the existence of another Father beyond the Creator [the Demiurge], and who term him the good God, do deceive themselves; for they introduce him as a feeble, worthless, and negligent being, not to say malign and full of envy, inasmuch as they affirm that our bodies are not quickened by him. For when *they say* of things which it is manifest to all do *remain immortal*, such as the spirit and the soul, and such other things, that they are quickened by the Father, but that another thing [viz., the body] which is quickened in no different manner than by God granting [life] to it, is abandoned by life,—[they must either confess] that this proves their Father to be weak and powerless, or else envious and malignant."³

But the determinative "*they say*" clearly puts the contention on the lips of the Gnostics, and off the shoulders of Irenaeus. He denied their false and slanderous position regarding the Creator, and their allegation as to His impotence and malignity. In a score of places Irenaeus declares that Christ is omnipotent, that He is Creator and Redeemer, and *the*

² Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment*, p. 238.

³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 5, chap. 4, sec. 1, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 530. (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

Bestower of immortality on the righteous only at the resurrection. Thus case number one collapses.

After this introduction Irenaeus comments further:

"For since the [true] Creator [Christ] does even here quicken [make alive] our mortal bodies, and promises them resurrection by the prophets, as I have pointed out; who [in that case] is shown to be more powerful, stronger, or truly good? Whether is it the Creator who vivifies the whole man, or is it their Father, falsely so called? He [the Gnostic Demiurge] feigns to be the quickener of those things which are *immortal by nature*, to which things life is always present by their very nature; but he does not benevolently quicken those things which required his assistance, that they might live, but leaves them carelessly to fall under the power of death. Whether is it the case, then, that their Father does not bestow life upon them when he has the power of so doing, or is it that he does not possess the power?"⁴

Irenaeus is simply continuing to expose the falsity of their contention on the impotent Demiurge. To impute their false position to Irenaeus, who is denying and opposing it, is a grave injustice, for Irenaeus did *not* so believe. Irenaeus is here arguing against a false Gnostic distinction between persons in the Godhead—a powerless Demiurge-Creator and the "Good Father"—and their arbitrary and false argument against those fleshly and animal souls who have no possible hope of salvation and immortality. But God made all souls *for* eternal life. It is unrepentant sinners who deprive themselves of that great boon. This contention is borne out by the remainder of the chapter.

2. SECOND CASE MERELY STATES Gnostic POSITION.—The other case, in chapter seven, speaks of the resurrection. The passage shows that he calls the soul "immortal," not absolutely but in comparison or contrast with the body, which dies and is dissolved. But not so with the soul, or spirit. Irenaeus apparently regarded death as a process of dissolution for the material body, *whereas the soul merely comes to an end*. Now note the introductory phrasing:

"In the same manner, therefore, as Christ did rise in the substance of flesh, and pointed out to His disciples the mark of the nails and the opening in His side (now these are the tokens of that flesh which rose from the dead), so 'shall He also,' it is said, 'raise us up by His own power.' And again to the Romans he says, 'But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies.'"⁵

Then comes the crucial passage, distinguishing between body and soul, and the "breath of life":

"What, then, are mortal bodies? Can they be souls? Nay, for souls are incorporeal when put in comparison with mortal bodies; for God 'breathed into the face of man the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' Now the nor to the spirit, for the spirit is simple and not composite, so that it cannot maintain that the very breath of life is mortal. Therefore David says, 'My soul also shall live to Him,' *just as if its substance were immortal.*"⁶

Here again Irenaeus is arguing concerning Gnostic contentions,

⁴ *Ibid.* (Brackets in original; italics supplied.)

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 7, sec. 1, p. 532.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 532, 533. (Italics supplied.)

"just as if" they were so. But that is a far cry from assenting to their thesis of the Innate Immortality of the "spiritual."

This distinction he develops in this further comment:

"Neither, on the other hand, can they say that the spirit is the mortal body. What therefore is there left to which we may apply the term 'mortal body,' unless it be the thing that was moulded, that is, the flesh, of which it is also said that God will vivify it? For this it is which dies and is decomposed, but not the soul or the spirit. For to die is to lose vital power, and to become henceforth breathless, inanimate, and devoid of motion, and to melt away into those [component parts] from which also it derived the commencement of [its] substance. But this event happens neither to the soul, for it is the breath of life; nor to the spirit, for the spirit is simple and not composite, so that it cannot be decomposed, and is itself the life of those who receive it. We must therefore conclude that it is in reference to the flesh that death is mentioned; which [flesh], after the soul's departure, becomes breathless and inanimate, and is decomposed gradually into the earth from which it was taken. This, then, is what is mortal."⁷

Irenaeus is therefore here further arguing against the Gnostics who, he has stated, derived their principles from Plato and other pagan sources as regards the soul. Such held that souls could be immortalized only if uncreated, for if they had a beginning they must die, or cease with the body. Irenaeus has consistently maintained that *absolute* immortality is possessed only by God. To all other beings both their *commencement* and their *continuance* depends entirely on God. That is, the will of God must originate and determine all things.

So Irenaeus consistently protests the Gnostic theory of a natural and necessary immortality of all "spiritual" souls, independently of the divine will, yet accepting as God's purpose the maintenance of all responsive souls in endless being. Yet some have strangely and fallaciously claimed that Irenaeus is, in these passages, arguing in favor of Plato's universal Innate-Immortality thesis. But such is manifestly untrue. He consistently claimed immortality to be the peculiar birthright only of the righteous redeemed.

3. IRENAEUS UNQUESTIONABLY TAUGHT CONDITIONALISM.—It is therefore clearly and emphatically evident that, according to Irenaeus, the lover of the world will *lose* his soul; that such will God *destroy*, both body and soul; that unquenchable fire will *burn up* the chaff; that the wicked go into the everlasting (*aiōnion*) fire, and undergo everlasting punishment, whom Irenaeus had by almost every form of speech declared to be utterly bereft of immortality and continuance. He taught that everlasting punishment means everlasting destruction and cessation of being, and that fire is the instrument of that destruction—for to be deprived of the benefit of existence is a punishment; and to be forever deprived of it is to suffer an eternal punishment. So, in opposition to the Gnostics and other kindred heretics, Irenaeus declared that such is the bleak prospect for eternity for those who live and die without God.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 533. (Brackets in original.)

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Subject Guide

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