Instead of man's hope being in his possessing an immortal soul, the Bible shows that it is in a resurrection because of the ransom provided by Christ Jesus. (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6) Because he knew that he would provide a ransom for man, Jesus confidently stated: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [my] voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment." Paul's entire argument in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, is to the effect that Christ Jesus was raised from the dead and that since that is so, there is also hope for others who have died. He further shows that if there were no resurrection of the dead then those fallen asleep in Christ would have perished and that Christians would be of all men most miserable. But if at death man went to heaven, purgatory or some other place, then the apostle's argument would be pointless.—Matthew 22:29-32; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-33.

In view of the foregoing it is not at all surprising that such religious authorities as Dr. S. D. McDonnell, one-time rector of All Soul's Church, New York city, and Professor Frederick Palmer, A.B., D.D., one-time member of the Harvard Divinity faculty tell that the Christians of the first two centuries after Christ did not believe in an immortal soul and that the idea was brought in by Grecian converts and gradually became a part of the so-called Christian religion.

The Bible is reasonable, clear and consistent on the matter of what constitutes the hope for the dead. It shows that man's

hope lies not in immortality of the soul but in a resurrection, an awakening from the dead. The wages sin pays is death. Jehovah God is wise and loving and has a purpose for everything he does. What purpose would immortality of the wicked serve? None whatsoever. The wicked will cease to exist. On the other hand, the everlasting life of the righteous will bring honor to Jehovah's name and endless joy to them.—Proverbs 10:7; Romans 6:23; Revelation 4:11; 21:1-4.

Unless otherwise indicated, scriptures quoted herein are from the "American Standard Version" for the Hebrew Scriptures or the "New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures."

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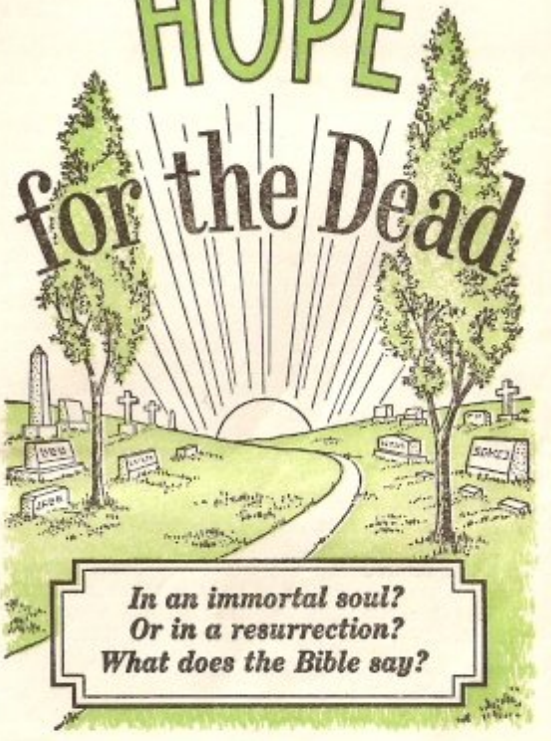
HOPE for the Dead



In an immortal soul?
Or in a resurrection?
What does the Bible say?

HOPE FOR THE DEAD

Doubtless everyone of mature years has lost one or more loved ones to the great enemy Death. May we entertain a hope for such? And if so, is that hope based upon man's having an immortal soul or upon a resurrection from the dead? As Job asked: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14) Before giving consideration to these questions let us first of all ascertain why man dies.

The greatest teacher of all time, Christ Jesus, said of the Bible: "Your word is truth." We shall therefore go to it for the answers to our questions. The Bible shows that Jehovah God, the great First Cause, created all things, including the earth and man; that he placed the first human pair in a beautiful garden and commissioned them to be fruitful, fill the earth and subdue it and to have dominion over the lower animals; and that as a test of appreciation God commanded them not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree. Man, being perfect and a free moral agent, was fully able to obey that command.—Genesis 1:1, 26-28; 2:15-17; Deuteronomy 32:4; John 17:17.

Man and woman, lacking in appreciation, disobeyed and were sentenced to death and in course of time they did die, returning to the ground from which they had been taken. (Genesis 3:1-19; 5:5) As their children were not brought forth until after they had sinned, these were born sinners, with the condemnation of death hanging over them. "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." "There is not a righteous man, not even one."—Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:10; 5:12.

What Is Man's Hope?

That man's hope for life after death lies in his having an immortal soul is a belief as ancient as it is widespread. According to Herodotus, a pagan

Grecian historian, the pagan Egyptians were the first who held to this belief. Pythagoras, born 608 B.C., taught that every human creature had an immortal soul that was separate and distinct from his fleshly body and which was able to transmigrate from one fleshly body to another. A century and a half later, Socrates, another pagan Grecian philosopher, rose up, whose foremost pupil, Plato, made the teaching of the immortality of the human soul popular. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* informs us that the Jews got their belief of soul immortality from the surrounding pagans.

By far the greater number of those professing to be Christians likewise hold that man's hope for future life lies in his having an immortal soul which at death goes to heaven, purgatory or hell-fire. Scientists have been unable to discover any evidence whatsoever that man has an immortal soul. There is absolutely no tangible proof to that effect. Admitting this, its advocates reply that they have Scriptural proof. But, we ask, does the Bible teach that man has an immortal soul?

In the Scriptural account of creation we do not read that man received a soul, but rather that upon creation man *"became a living soul"*. (Genesis 2:7) The word "soul" as used in the Bible translates either the Hebrew word *nephesh* or the Greek word *psy·che'*. The Hebrew word for soul, *nephesh*, is often applied to the lower animals. "And God said —Let the waters swarm with an abundance of living soul, . . . Let the

LIVING SOULS

land bring forth living soul after its kind." (Genesis 1:20, 24, *Rotherham*) And again: "Separate . . . one soul of five hundred as well of persons as of oxen and asses and sheep." (Numbers 31:28, *Douay*) Clearly the Bible speaks of the lower animals as souls.

Since both man and the lower animals are souls, and since both die, it must follow that souls die; and that is exactly what the Bible unequivocally states. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) "Let my soul die the death of the just." "Every living soul died in the sea." (Numbers 23:10 and Apocalypse (Revelation) 16:3, *Douay*) Yes, "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; and man hath no preeminence above the beasts: for all is vanity."—Ecclesiastes 3:19.

If man is conscious after death, would not those who were awakened from the dead, such as Lazarus, who was dead four days, have had something to say about their unusual experience? But in death man is not conscious: "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything" because "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol", the grave.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

There is not one text in the Bible which states that the soul is immortal. Indeed there could not be, for such would contradict the above texts, and the Bible does not contradict itself. Jehovah God is immortal and incorruptible and so is his Son, Christ Jesus, since his resurrection. (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Hebrews 1:3, 4; Revelation 1:18) The Bible shows that Jesus Christ brought immortality to light with the gospel and that in the resurrection the body of the Christ will be changed from mortal to immortal, divine creatures. (1 Corinthians 15:53, 54; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Peter 1:4) The doctrine of the immortality of human souls is based on Satan's first lie, "Ye shall not surely die."—Genesis 3:4.