

Appeal on Immortality

by James White

1. Is it reasonable to suppose that God created man an immortal being, and yet never once in his holy word informed us of the fact?

2. Is it reasonable to suppose that if man naturally possessed immortality, God's word would recommend us to seek for it, as it does in Rom. 2:7?

3. Is it reasonable to suppose, that if men were naturally immortal, God's word would so plainly assure us that "God *only* hath immortality?" 1 Tim. 6:16.

4. Is it not far more reasonable to believe that immortality is the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Rom. 6:23.

5. Is it reasonable to suppose that words, when found in the Bible, *must* have a meaning attached to them, which no man in his senses would ever think of attaching to them in any other book? For instance, the words *Life* and *Death*, when found in the Bible, *must* (as theologians tell us) mean *happiness* and *misery*; but, if found in any other book in the world, they would simply mean "Existence" and "Cessation of existence."

6. Is it reasonable to suppose that in all the vast multitude of passages in which Christ promised *Life*, *Eternal Life*, to his followers, he did not literally mean what he said? This he could not, if all men have immortal life by nature. In that case the wicked will live through eternity as well as the righteous.

7. Is it reasonable to suppose, in all the vast multitude of passages in which *Death* is threatened as the punishment of the sinner, that *loss of happiness*

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is all that is meant? An unhappy man is as truly alive as the most happy being in existence; and if he be immortal by nature, will continue alive through all eternity. In no plain, common-sense language can any immortal being be said to suffer *Death*.

8. Is it reasonable to suppose that infinite wisdom would invariably use language which was only calculated to mislead mankind? or which none but doctors of divinity could unravel? Would God speak in riddles to men in the great matters which concern their salvation?

9. Is it not more reasonable, and more in accordance with the wisdom and love of God to suppose that he would give his creatures such a revelation, as plain, common-sense people could easily understand? He has done so: if men would use their reason in reading the Bible, as they would do in reading any other book.

10. Is it reasonable to believe that men go to heaven or hell immediately at death, and then hundreds or thousands of years afterward are taken out to be judged, and to see which they deserve to be sent to? Should we deem it right to send a man to the State's prison for ten years, and then bring him out for trial to see if he deserved such a punishment? And "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

11. Is it reasonable that such prominence should be given in Scripture to the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, if that event only means a "re-union" of a lump of clay, with the conscious thinking and real man--*the soul*; and which is said by theologians to be as capable of happiness or misery, without the body as with it?

12. Is it reasonable to talk about a "death that never dies," when there is not a word in Scripture to sanction such a contradictory phrase? Would it not be equally reasonable to speak of the reward of the righteous as a "life that never lives?" Is

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there not as much common sense in the one as in the other?

13. Is it reasonable to be so constantly, both in sermons and prayers, talking about "immortal souls," "never-dying souls," "deathless spirits," and such like expressions, when there is not from Genesis to Revelation *one single passage* to warrant the use of such language?

14. Is it reasonable to say that eternal death and eternal torment are synonymous expressions (as theologians tell us)--for how then can it be said in Rev. 21:4, "There shall be *no* more death?"

15. Is it reasonable to believe that a hell of fiery torment and ceaseless misery is to exist forever, when God says [Rev. 21:5], "Behold, I make all things new?"

16. Is it reasonable to believe in the eternal torment of the wicked, when more than two hundred passages of Scripture plainly affirm that they shall "die," be "consumed," "devoured," "destroyed," "burnt up," be as though they had not been," etc.?

17. Is it reasonable to believe that the righteous in their glorified state can be indifferent to, and unaffected by, the endless sufferings of countless millions of their fellow beings; among whom would probably be found parents, children, husbands, wives, etc.? Is it possible that they will be destitute or deprived of qualities which are considered most lovely and godlike in this life; viz., piety, sympathy, compassion, commiseration for others' woes, etc.? Will insensibility to the woes of the wretched ever become a virtue? Will that which is a vice in this life, become a grace in the glorious future life? Is the standard of virtue thus variable, that what is vicious here, is to be gracious hereafter?

18. Is it reasonable to believe that a God of infinite rectitude will punish with eternal torment the

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heathen who have never heard of Christ, and who therefore could not reject him? Is it possible that God can cast into one indiscriminate mass of fiery torment, the least wicked among the heathen, together with the most guilty in this Christian land? for such must be the case if their souls are immortal, and if their torment is to be eternal. There can be no degrees in that which is infinite. Is it not far more reasonable to believe the apostle's words *literally*, "For as many as have sinned without the law, shall also perish without law?" Rom. 2:12

19. Is it reasonable to believe that God is such a vindictive being, that his justice cannot be satisfied with the *death* of the offender?

but that he must be constantly pouring floods of fiery wrath upon the wretched being through the ever rolling cycles of eternity?

I might multiply questions of this kind, but I forbear.

Men of reason and common sense, give your serious attention to these points. Read your Bibles again. Read carefully--read prayerfully. See if these things be true or not. Dare to think for yourselves. Do not trust to commentaries. Do not build your faith on bodies of divinity. Go to the fountain head of truth. "The words of the Lord are tried words." "The law of the Lord is perfect." This cannot be said of the writings or opinions of any man, or number of men, however wise or holy they may be. To err is human. God and his truth alone are infallible. Show yourselves *true* Protestants, and cast away the "traditions of men." You have the Bible. The wisest and holiest of the "fathers" had no more. Your ministers have nothing else to guide them--at least they ought not. "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the book for Protestants." Go then to your Bibles, and see if the God-dishonoring doctrines to which

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I have directed your attention are found there or not. Excuse me if I tell you, that, however full of these doctrines human books and human sermons may be, God's Bible does not contain them.

Rather, believe that man is *mortal* and condemned to die, but Christ is "come that men may have *life*, and that they may have it more abundantly." John 10:10.

"The wages of sin is *death*, but the gift of God is *eternal life*, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23.

Forty Questions on Immortality

1. Who is immortal? Ans. "The King eternal, *immortal*, invisible, the only wise God." 1 Tim. 1:17.

2. Are not all men possessed of immortality? Ans. "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords: who only hath immortality." 1 Tim. 6:16.

3. Are not all men created immortal? Ans. God "only hath immortality." 1 Tim. 6:16.

4. Is there any way by which men may obtain immortality? Ans. "To us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Pet. 1:4.

5. Is this immortality revealed by Plato or Socrates, or by familiar rapping spirits, or in nature,--or is it through Jesus Christ and his gospel? Ans. "By the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light *through* the gospel." 1 Tim. 1:10

6. Who has power to bestow immortality upon man? Ans. "the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23.

7. Will God give this gift to all persons whatever their works may be? Ans. God "will render

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to every man *according* to his deeds." Rom. 2:6.

8. What will be the portion of those who are contentious and obey not the truth? Ans. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth *evil*." Rom. 2:8, 9.

9. To whom will God impart immortality? Ans. "To them who by patient continuance in well-do-ing, *seek* for glory and honor and immortality." Rom. 2:7.

10. What shall be their reward? Ans. "*Eternal life*." Rom. 2:7.

11. Upon what conditions may we obtain this blessing? Ans. "Fight the good fight of faith, *lay hold* on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6:12.

12. When do men obtain immortality? Is it at death or at the resurrection? Ans. "The dead shall be raised incorruptible." 1 Cor. 15:52.

13. How shall those who are not dead become incorruptible? Ans. "We shall be *changed*." 1 Cor. 15:52.

14. When will this change take place? Ans. "At the last trump." 1 Cor. 15:52.

15. How suddenly will the change occur? Ans. "In a *moment*, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Cor. 15:52.

16. Will this change be a change of the internal, or the external and physical, or corruptible man? Ans. "This corruptible must *put on* incorruption." 1 Cor. 15:53.

17. What, then, becomes immortal? Ans. "This mortal must *put on* immortality." 1 Cor. 15:53.

18. What Scripture will be fulfilled when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality? Ans. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 15:56; Isa 25:8.

19. Who will be raised from the dead? Ans.

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"*All* that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." John 5:28, 29.

20. Will the unburied arise? Ans. "The *sea* gave up the dead which were in it' and death and hell [the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them." Rev. 20:13.

21. Will different classes of characters arise in the resurrection? Ans. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, *both* of the just and unjust." Acts 24:15.

22. For what purpose will the good be raised? ans. "They that have done good unto the resurrection of *life*." John 5:29.

23. To what will others be raised? Ans. "They that have done evil unto the resurrection of *damnation*." John 5:29.

24. Will a man's destiny at last be in accordance with his previous life? Ans. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7.

25. What will be the portion of the ungodly? Ans. "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap *corruption*." Gal. 6:8.

26. What will be the reward of the saint? Ans. "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap *life everlasting*." Gal. 6:8.

27. Where now is the Christian's life? Ans. "Your life is *hid with Christ* in God." Col. 3:3.

28. How, then, should we live? Ans. "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Gal. 6:9.

29. What will be the fate of those who sow to the flesh? Ans. "They shall *utterly perish* in their own corruption." 2 Pet. 2:12.

30. Is it possible for man to be utterly destroyed? Ans. "Fear him which is able to destroy both *soul and body* in hell." Matt. 10:28.

31. What is the wages of sin? Ans. "The wages of sin is *death*." Rom. 6:23.

32. Is this death merely a bodily death? Ans.

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"The soul that sinneth it shall *die*." Eze. 18:20.

33. If the wicked turn away from his wickedness and do right, what then? Ans. "He shall save his soul *alive*." Eze. 18:27.

34. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquities and dieth in them," what shall be his fate? Ans. "For his iniquity that he hath done, shall he *die*." Eze. 18:26.

35. As he first dies *in* his iniquity, and then dies *for* his iniquity, what must this last death be called? Ans. "The *second* death." Rev. 21:8.

36. What is the result attained by the man who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways? Ans. "He shall save a soul from *death*." James 5:20.

37. What has God placed before us to excite us to action? Ans. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you *life and death*, blessing and cursing." Deut. 30:19.

38. How does God manifest his love to men? Ans. 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.

39. What is our Saviour's complaint concerning mankind? Ans. "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John 5:40

40. What is the command of God to all? Ans. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, . . . for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." Eze. 18:31, 32.