

## CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

**43. Various Accusing Fingers Incriminate Platonism**

[www.CreationismOnline.com](http://www.CreationismOnline.com)

The geographical spread of the twelve spokesmen in this chapter ranges from Canada and the United States in the West, to faraway India in the East—along with England, Scotland, Switzerland, and Germany in the Old World. They include a provost, eight university professors, a bishop, an Institute director, and a Keswick speaker. They include men of international renown. And in religious affiliation they run all the way from Anglican to Swiss Reformed, Church of Scotland, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Episcopalian, and Disciple. The remarkable harmony of affirmation on one or more of the three major features of Conditionalism continues, along with relentless exposure of the Platonic fallacies and foibles that have penetrated and perverted the church. The momentum of the movement has not slackened. First we turn to Canada.

**1. Toronto's Owen—"Greek Dualism" Perverted Christian Theology**

Dr. DERWYN R. G. OWEN, [1] provost of Trinity College, University of Toronto, issued an impressive volume in 1956 titled *Body and Soul*, with the subtitle, "A Study on the Christian

1 DERWYN R. G. OWEN (1914- ), Anglican, was trained at the University of Toronto and Union Theological Seminary. He was the son of Archbishop D. T. Owen, late Primate of the Church of Canada. After teaching and army chaplaincies, he joined the staff of Trinity College, of which he is now executive head. It is interesting to note that Owen studied under both Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, whose positions on the current discussion are sketched elsewhere in this twentieth-century section.

View of Man." Leading off with a penetrating contrast between the Greek "religious" and the true "Christian" concepts, Owen asserts, in his thoroughly documented work, that— "the 'religious' anthropology is not Christian but Greek and Eastern both in origin and in nature, and that it is this view of man, and not the Christian, that the scientific evidence refutes." [2]

1. NO "INDEPENDENT" SOUL IN A "CORRUPTIBLE BODY."— Professor Owen stresses the fact that the "religious," as he calls the traditional Greek view, ever presents a "dualism"—an "immortal soul" in a perishing body.

"The points at issue revolve around the concepts of 'body' and 'soul.' The 'religious' anthropology [in contradistinction to the Biblical] adopts an extreme dualism, asserting that the body and the soul are two different and distinct substances. It claims that the soul is divine in origin and immortal by nature and that the corruptible body is the source of all sin and wickedness. It recommends the cultivation of the soul in detachment from the body, and advocates the suppression of all physical appetites and natural impulses. It regards the body as the tomb or prison of the soul from which it longs to get free. Finally, it tends to suppose that the soul, even in its earth-bound existence, is entirely independent of the body and so enjoys a freedom of choice and action untrammelled by the views that reign in the physical realm." [3]

On the contrary, Owen holds that man is a "unified psychosomatic whole" and that "there can be no detachable part of man that survives physical death." [4]

2 D. R. G. Owen, *Body and Soul*, p. 26.

3 Ibid. (Italics supplied.)

4 Ibid., p. 27.

2. PHILOSOPHY OF "DUALISM" FROM GREEKS.—Holding that the Christian belief teaches the full mortality of man, Owen adds that it assuredly does not teach that "some one part of human nature is inherently immortal." Owen also says that "many of our hymns are nothing but thinly disguised Orphic poems." [5] Then he states:

"If we turn to the Bible, however, as we shall later, we find that a quite different view of man is assumed throughout. Here there is no dualism and scarcely any idea of the immortality of a detached and independent soul." [6]

"The Bible," he states, "assumes that human nature is a unity; in the New Testament it teaches that man's ultimate destiny involves the 'resurrection of the body.' [7] The Greek, or religious, concepts, he adds, are an "intrusion." [8]

3. "DUALISM" IS INTEGRAL PART OF PLATONISM.—Tracing the Greek origin of the body-soul dualism, which came to a head under "the Orphic," and reached its peak under Plato, Owen points out that it involved transmigration, with the body a "prison" for the soul. Man's "earthly existence" was thus a "living death"—a soul "trapped in a body." [9] Thus the body was despised. Moreover, Plato held that the soul "always has existed and always will exist." [10] Professor Owen then states:

"Plato remains to the end an anti-physical dualist. It is he, and his followers, who most of all are responsible for imposing the 'religious' anthropology on Western thought." [11]

"This latter belief especially—the idea that the soul can exist apart from the body—obviously implies some form of the body-soul dualism. . . . This body-soul dualism was a necessary implicate of the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul." [12]

4. BIBLICAL "RESURRECTION" OPPOSED TO "ORPHIC ESCHATOLOGY."—Dr. Owen shows how there was a similar strain in the Indian teaching, likewise involving "dualism" and "transmigration," and "disembodied blessedness." [13]

5 Ibid., p. 28.

6 Ibid., p. 24.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 33.

9 Ibid., pp. 33-36.

10 Ibid., p. 38.

11 Ibid., p. 41.

12 Ibid., p. 59.

13 Ibid., pp. 45-48.

Then he traces the fatal transfer from pagan Greek philosophy to Christian Neoplatonism, and thus into the Alexandrian wing of Christianity [14]—protested however by Justin Martyr and others but developed by Tertullian and those who followed his lead. [15] Owen then observes:

"Now there are a few isolated Scriptural passages that may suggest the idea of the immortality of the soul in the Greek sense, but the normal-Biblical point of view is quite different: in the New Testament it is the resurrection of the body that is stressed, and this doctrine is almost a direct contradiction of the 'Orphic' eschatology. Why, then, did the Fathers lean toward this largely un-Biblical notion?" [16]

"The fact is that the Fathers' adoption of the 'religious' idea of the immortality of the detachable soul forced them into the doctrine of body-soul dualism." [17]

5. "INTERMEDIATE STATE" LEADS TO PURGATORY CONCEPT. —Out of this background developed the "intermediate state" concept for the "detachable soul," and eventually the "purgatory doctrine"—with its wide repercussions:

"The idea of the intermediate state eventually developed into the doctrine of purgatory." [18]

"The Fathers were no doubt impressed by the force of the arguments advanced by Greek philosophy to prove the immortality of the soul. And, finally, of course, the idea of an intermediate state gave the human being another chance to be purged of his sins before the last judgment. It was the development of this notion that led to the doctrine of purgatory, with all the superstitions and objectionable practices that eventually made up the purgatorial system and, in the end, furnished part of the immediate cause of the Reformation." [19]

Owen says further, concerning the Church Fathers:

"Their [the Church Fathers'] resulting anthropology was a mixture of Biblical and Greek ideas. They added to the New Testament doctrine of the resurrection of the body the idea of an intermediate state in which the soul exists apart from the body, awaiting its recovery at the end." [20]

14 Ibid., pp. 50-52.

15 Ibid., pp. 54-58.

16 Ibid., p. 59.

17 Ibid., p. 61.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 62.

20 Ibid., p. 77. (Italics supplied.)

1. "DEATH KNELL" OF DUALISM SOUNDED.—Owen then shows how the controversy continued through the Middle Ages, involving men like Aquinas. It was characterized by the revival of the "Aristotelian theory of the soul," but with the Greek philosophy predominant. Touching on the Renaissance, Owen then notes the Reformation conflict between Luther and Calvin "—Luther holding that the dead are "asleep," or "at rest," and Calvin maintaining that disembodied souls survive in intense consciousness. Space forbids following further Owen's interesting and factual historical tracement, but he consistently affirms that man is a "unitary being." [21, 22, 23] Owen then makes the trenchant observation:

"Dualism hears its death knell sounded. And if dualism has to be abandoned, we can no longer suppose that the soul is a detachable part that can survive bodily death by itself. The old doctrine of the immortality of the separated soul must now itself be gently ushered into the place of departed spirits. Similarly, we can no longer regard the body as a second separable part of man, the source of all temptation and sin, which must be sternly suppressed. Repressive moralism is given its obituary notice." [24]

7. "BIBLICAL VIEW" TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL.—Turning to the "Biblical" view of man, Dr. Owen recapitulates:

"The 'religious' anthropology, as far as Western thought is concerned, is Greek and not Biblical in origin. It is also typical of Eastern religions in general, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. It seems to be characteristically 'religious,' and for this and other reasons has tended to creep into and corrupt the Christian view of man. This happened, as we saw, in the patristic and medieval periods, and modern Catholicism and Protestantism have tended to perpetuate this early mistake." [25]

But, he repeats, "The Biblical view of man is entirely different from the 'religious.' " [26] And once again Owen pins the Innate Immortality postulate squarely upon the Alexandrian School in the Inter-Testament period:

"The idea of the immortality of the soul in the Greek sense may be suggested in some passages in the wisdom literature and is definitely found in places in the Apocrypha. This line of thought was later developed in the Hellenistic Judaism of the Alexandrine School, in the inter-Testament period, of which the religious philosopher Philo is the outstanding example." [27]

21 Ibid., pp. 62-68.

22 Ibid., pp. 70-74.

23 Ibid., p. 75.

24 Ibid., p. 98. (Italics supplied.)

25 Ibid., p. 163.

26 Ibid., p. 164.

27 Ibid., p. 178.

Such is the masterful survey made by this Canadian educator.

## **2. Zurich's Brunner—Sinner Brings "Eternal Destruction" Upon Himself**

Eminent Swiss scholar, Dr. EMIL, BRUNNER, [28] professor of systematic theology at the University of Zurich, believes ultimate, complete extinction of being to be the fate of the sinner. Though created "for eternity," the wilful sinner's "eternal destruction," which deprives him of life, is brought about by his own choice. He has the power to turn away from the "eternal destiny" desired of God for him. But first Brunner deals with Platonic Immortal-Soulism.

I. PLATONIC INNATISM IS NOT "BIBLICAL."—Platonic Immortal-Soulism has, he holds, replaced the Biblical truth as to man's nature and destiny. But man determines his own "des-tiny" by his own choices:

"It is true that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as a sub-stance is of Platonist and not of Biblical origin. It is a result of the view that the human spirit is essentially 'divine.' But if we start from what God has given us in His self-revelation, this idea of an immortal soul is replaced by the truth of man's destiny for eternal communion with God. The essential destiny of man is not substantial immortality, but eternal life. This eternal destiny is, however, to this extent, part of the essential structure of man, in that what man is, can never be understood apart from his relation to this destiny. Man never ceases to be a being created for eternity, even when he misses his true destiny by turning away from God and from his eternal destiny. Just as man does not cease to be a responsible being when he sins, so too he does not cease to be a being destined for eternity." [29]

28 Emil BRUNNER (1889- ), Swiss Reformed dialectical theologian, was trained at Zurich, Berlin, and Union Theological. After a period of pastoral and teaching work, he became professor of theology at Zurich (1916-1924), then at Christian University. Tokyo. He supported Karl Barth in protesting Christian mysticism, and has lectured widely in European and American universities. He was guest professor at Princeton (1938-1939) and Gifford Lecturer in 1947 and 1948 in Scottish universities. His more important books total nine.

29. Emil Brunner. *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (vol. 2 of *Dogmatics*, tr. by Wyon), p. 59. (Italics supplied.)

2. SINNER DEPRIVES HIMSELF OF ETERNAL LIFE.—The sinner, Brunner says, brings "eternal destruction" upon him-self:

"Just as sin deprives man of true humanity, true responsibility, and the love of God, so also sin deprives him of that eternal life for which he has been destined. As a sinner he lives no longer in the love of God, but he comes under the divine wrath. This divine wrath, however, does not destroy his eternal destiny. In depriving himself of eternal life he brings upon himself eternal destruction." [30]

3. PAGAN ORIGIN OF SOUL-SURVIVAL CONCEPT.—In chapter 11, "The Mystery of Death," in *Eternal Hope* (1954) , after noting the "pathos" of many "funeral orations," Brunner states, concerning the "phenomenon" of death:

"Man does not die like other higher animals, any more than he lives like them. Human existence is an exception in the world of living beings; for man is the only living being who is a person. Hence his death is something other than the death of animals." [31]

Touching on "dissolution," and whether a man is "finished when he dies," and the "relation of soul and body," [32] Brunner points out the pagan view of soul survival as coming from animism, as well as from Indian and Egyptian sources:

"Widely spread among all peoples and at all times is the idea of a survival of the soul after death, i.e. the view that death means the separation of soul from body. This view appears in many varied forms from primitive animism to the philosophical doctrine of immortality. It assumes the form of the Indian teaching of Karma about the reincarnation of the soul in another life in a state corresponding to its ethical worth. Again it appears in the idea, first found in ancient Egypt, of an otherworldly judgment, in which some souls will be assigned to a joyful and radiant world, others to a dark, joyless, and tormented existence in the beyond." [33]

4. PLATONIC INNATISM ASSIMILATED BY CATHOLICISM.—The penetration of Platonism into dominant Catholic dogma, and through Calvin incorporated into post-Reformation theology, is next noted—along with recent restudy:

"For the history of Western thought, the Platonic teaching of the immortality of the soul became of special significance. It penetrated so deeply into the thought of Western man because, although with certain modifications, it was assimilated by Christian theology and church teaching, was even declared by the Lateran Council of 1512 [1513] to be a dogma, to contradict which was a heresy, and likewise from Calvin onwards it was assumed in post-Reformation Protestantism to be a part of Christian doctrine. Only recently, as a result of a deepened understanding of the New Testament, have strong doubts arisen as to its compatibility with the Christian conception of the relation—between God and man, and its essentially pre-Christian origin has been ever more emphasized." [34]

30 Ibid. (Italics supplied.)

32 Ibid., pp. 98, 99.

31 Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, p. 97.

33 Ibid., p. 100. (Italics supplied.)

Brunner observes, logically:

"If the soul is immortal in the sense and for the reason which Plato and his successors teach, then the problem of death is solved because death has no power over the deeper side of man as a person." [35]

Then this would be true: "Death can affect the immortal soul as little as the waves of the tossing sea the lighthouse." [36]

5. SINISTER IMPLICATIONS OF "PLATONIC DUALISM."—The essence of Platonism and its Dualism is this:

"The body is mortal, the soul immortal. The mortal husk conceals this eternal essence which in death is freed from its outer shell." [37]

"That this dualistic conception of man does not correspond to the Christian outlook can be shown from various angles. The contrast stands out most clearly in the two following points. The effect of this Platonic dualism is not merely to make death innocuous but also to rob evil of its sting." [38]

6. FANTASIES OF PLATONISM V. REVELATION OF GOD.—Grave encroachment of Platonism upon the divine prerogatives of God is also involved. It claims man is "divine":

"The second aspect of the contrast to the Christian view is as follows. Man in his spiritual and higher being is divine, not creaturely. God is not His creator, God is the all of which the human spirit is but a part. Man is a participator in the divine in the most direct and literal sense. Hence, since this mode of robbing evil of its sting runs necessarily parallel with the rendering innocuous of death through the teaching about immortality, this solution of the problem of death stands in irreconcilable opposition to Christian thought. One believes either in the immortality of the soul—and it is only necessary to believe so long—as—one has not mastered the proof—immortality being essentially demonstrable—or one believes in the God of revelation." [39]

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., p. 101.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., pp. 101, 102. (Italics supplied.)

7. DEATH SPRINGS FROM HUMAN "REBELLION."—The Bible knows nothing of the "bi-section," or dualism, of man, says Brunner. Death must be taken "seriously," for the "wages of sin" is death, and sin is the revolt of the creature against the Creator:

"The guilt of sin separates him from God and robs man of the life which lay ready for him in God. For God Himself is life; whosoever is separated from Him is cut off from the sources of, life." [40]

Brunner then declares concerning death:

"Death is therefore for the Christian understanding an ordinance of God, but it is not an original element of the divine order in creation; on the contrary, it has arisen from disorder. It is the reaction of the divine anger to human rebellion." [41]

8. GREEK PHILOSOPHY IRRECONCILABLE WITH DIVINE REVELATION.—Recapitulating, and reiterating the irreconcilable conflict between Platonism and Inspiration, Brunner records:

"Let us cast a glance once again at the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It cannot be explained by weakness of faith on the part of the church that it took over a point of view which stemmed from such a different source—that of Greek philosophy, and was so utterly foreign to its own essential teaching. Somewhere in the Christian faith there must have been some opening through which this foreign doctrine could penetrate. Assuredly, from the Biblical standpoint, it is God alone who possesses immortality. The opinion that we men are immortal because our soul is of an indestructible, because divine, essence is, once for all, irreconcilable with the Biblical view of God and man." [42]

Our sole hope and life are therefore in Christ.

9. CREATED AND DESTINED FOR ETERNAL LIFE.—Declaring that man was "created and destined for eternal life," though God's plan was "marred" by sin, Brunner says:

"There is here no possibility of a Platonic-Socratic anamnesis as a result of which we might find our way back to this eternal destiny. There is in us no eternal unimpaired, indestructible essence to which in face of evil and death we might have recourse. All that is the Platonic idealistic Vedantic outlook, not the Christian one." [43]

40 Ibid., p. 102.

41 Ibid., p. 103.

42 Ibid., pp. 105, 106. (Italics supplied.)

43 Ibid., p. 106.

We are to have "a genuinely Biblical Christo-centric faith in immortality. Not in the way we are made but in God's creative summons have we our eternal life." [44] This, then, is Brunner's depiction of Platonism:

"The philosophical belief in immortality is like an echo, both re-producing and falsifying the primal Word of this divine Creator. It is false because it does not take into account the real loss of this original destiny through sin." [45]

### **3. Aberdeen's Hunter—Pauline Truth Exposes Platonic Error**

Scottish theologian Dr. ARCHIBALD M. HUNTER, [46] of King's College, Aberdeen University, gave the James Sprunt Lectures at Union Theological Seminary in America in 1954. [47] These were published under the title *Interpreting Paul's Gospel*. Chapter five, "The Hope of Glory," it should be added, was first published in *Interpretation*. In the key chapter, early in the lecture series, Hunter made this statement:

"Paul holds that the life to come is a gift of God, not (as the Greeks held) a natural possession of man. Not the immortality of the soul but the resurrection of the body is his concern and hope." [48]

The distinction is vital.

1. REVIVAL OF ESCHATOLOGY UNMASKS GREEK INFLUENCES.—In his final lecture Dr. Hunter emphasizes the contemporary revival of the "Christian eschatology" phase of "biblical theology," with a resultant awakening to the fact of the strong influence that "Greek views of time and eternity" had exerted upon the church over the centuries. Here are Hunter's exact words:

"We have witnessed in this generation a notable revival in biblical theology, which has led us to rethink many of our cardinal doctrines. Christian theologians, long more deeply influenced than they knew by Greek views of time and eternity, are beginning to study again the biblical conceptions of these things. And it is growing clear that the time is ripe for a fresh approach to the whole subject of Christian eschatology." [49]

44 Ibid., p. 107.

45 Ibid.

46 ARCHIBALD MACBRIDE HUNTER (1906- ), Presbyterian. was trained at Glasgow and Oxford. After ministry in several churches he became professor of New Testament at Mansfield College, Oxford, and professor of Biblical criticism, Aberdeen University (1945- ). He was also Master of Christ's College, Aberdeen. He is author of ten books.

47 Archibald M. Hunter, *Interpreting Paul's Gospel* (1954), Preface, p. 9.

48 Ibid., p. 54. (Italics supplied.)

This very exposure of Platonic innatism by Hunter is simply part of the restudy conducted by scores of other contemporary scholars.

2. IMMORTALITY "GIFT OF GOD," NOT INNATELY OURS.—In the significant section "The Heart of the Christian Hope," Dr. Hunter makes "two simple points." The first is that "immortality" is a gift, not a natural possession:

"As 'God alone hath immortality,' immortal life for St. Paul, as for all the New Testament writers, is the gift of God in Christ. We are not immortal beings in our own right, so to speak. Just as St. John says, 'He that hath the Son hath life,' so Paul holds that our hope of immortality is bound up with belonging to Christ—with 'Christ in us, the hope of glory.' " [50]

1. NOT "DISEMBODIED" SPIRITS BUT "WHOLE MEN."—The second point is closely akin—that the Platonic fallacy has all too often set aside the historic faith. The two concepts are totally opposed:

"Plato's hope was set on the immortality of the soul. Paul's is set on the resurrection of the body—the spiritual body,' as he explains in 1 Cor. 15, for manifestly our present frame of flesh and blood is doomed to dissolution. Soma, 'body,' as Paul uses it, has its nearest English equivalent in the word 'personality.' It is not as disembodied souls but as whole men, Paul would teach us, that we shall live hereafter. But this 'body,' this 'frame'—call it what you will—will be marvellously transformed in the world to come." [51]

These are significant statements and constitute highly competent testimony.

#### **4. India's Bishop Newbigin—Resurrection Not Immortality**

Even in far-flung Southern India, Bishop LESSLIE NEW-BIGIN, [52] active in World Council of Churches affairs, adds his voice to the growing chorus of witnesses around the globe, advocating that man be "treated as a living whole," and his "eternal future" be conceived of in terms of the "resurrection of the body," not in the framework of the "immortality of the soul." In 1954, in *The Household of God*, [53] Dr. Newbigin stated:

"In the Bible salvation is concerned with the whole created order. The whole visible world is ascribed to God, and it is, in its essential nature, good. Though the fall of man has mysteriously corrupted nature also, yet nature itself is not evil. Nor is it merely the neutral setting of man's spiritual life. It has its own part to play in glorifying God. And its renewal is part of the consummation for which at present the whole creation groans and travails in longing. In particular man's physical frame is not treated as the merely temporary envelope of an immortal spirit. Man is treated as a living whole and his eternal future is conceived of in terms of the resurrection of the body rather than of the immortality of the soul. The final consummation of all things is conceived to include the renewal of the whole created universe, and of man's body, and the restoration of its lost harmony in the joy of God's service." [54]

49 Ibid., p. 123.

50 Ibid., p. 133. (Italics supplied.)



51 Ibid. (Italics supplied.)

52 Leslie NEWBIGIN, of the Church of Scotland, was educated at Cambridge University, receiving his theological training at Westminster College. Going at once to the Madras Mission in South India, he served until 1947 when he was elected bishop of South India, for the diocese of Madura and Ramnad. He has been active in World Council of Churches work.

53 First given as the Kerr Lectures in Trinity College, Glasgow, in 1952.

54 Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (Copyrighted 1954 by Friendship Press, New York. Used by permission.), pp. 66, 67. (Italics supplied.)

### **5. Disciples' Robinson—"Bodiless Existence" of Greek Innatism Invalid**

Prof. WILLIAM ROBINSON [55] of the Department of Theology and Christian Doctrine of the Disciples of Christ Butler University, likewise distinguishes sharply between the Greek "immortality of the soul" thesis and the Christian view of "resurrection." It is through resurrection that there is "continuance" of personality. There is no "bodiless existence." Robinson also rejects Spiritualism's contentions. Thus:

"We go on to ask what the symbol of the general resurrection up-holds as part of the Christian faith. First, it makes clear the difference between the Greek notion of immortality of the soul and the Christian view of death. The Christian view does not point to the gruesome doctrine of the resurrection of this physical integument. That is denied by Paul most clearly, especially when he says that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.' The Christian view of death does affirm the continuance of real personality. Second, the symbol of the general resurrection preserves reverence for the body even after death." [56]

55 WILLIAM ROBINSON, Christian Church (Disciples), was trained at Dublin, Oxford, and Liverpool universities, then at Drake and Butler in America. After serving as principal of Overdale College, Birmingham he was professor of doctrine at Selly Oak College, Birmingham, then professor of theology and doctrine at Christian Theological Seminary, and Butler University (1951-1956). He is author of thirteen books and monographs.

NO WARRANT FOR A "BODILESS EXISTENCE."—The dead are not simply "absorbed into the Eternal." Nor are the "spooks" of Spiritualism valid:

"The spiritual body will have some relationship to the physical body in which our personality moves, just as our Lord's resurrection body had a real relationship to his physical body, for he was 'the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.' We may put the matter in a paradox: the body which was placed in the tomb left the tomb, though it was not the same body. It makes clear that in death the Christian is not just absorbed into the Eternal. The general resurrection assures us that we shall not depart to a bodiless existence: that death means life eternal and not a kind of pseudo-life which would be more intolerable than this life. The spooks which Spiritualism gives us are as unlike what Christianity offers as can be." [57]

### **6. Erlangen's Stauffer—Dead "Sleep" Under God's Protective Eye**

German Lutheran professor of New Testament, ETHEL-BERT STAUFFER, of the University of Erlangen, likewise stresses the "sleep" (of-the-dead) concept—as they rest "under God's eyes" and "protection." Commenting on 2 Corinthians 5: 6-10 and Philippians 1:23, he writes:

"Later writings display a considerable development of the problem together with copious additions of traditional material. But the basic formula is the same in all the changes of concepts and thought forms and is: the dead 'sleep' (Dan. 12:2, 13; Test. Zeb. 10:4ff.; 4 Ezra 7:95; S. Bar. 21:25; 1 Thess. 4:13ff.; 2 Pet. 3:4). They sleep under God's eyes and in his protection. Jesus commends his spirit into God's hands, with the words of the early Biblical evening prayer (Psa. 31:5; Luke 23:46; cf. 1 Pet. 4:19; 1 Cl. 27:1); and Stephen, with the same words, commends his spirit into Jesus' hands (Ch. 25)." [58]

CHRISTIAN RESURRECTION OPPOSED TO GREEK INNATISM.—Stauffer likewise makes sharp distinction between the doctrine of the "resurrection" and the Greek concept of Innate Immortality:

"The resurrection of the saints which is a part of the picture of the parousia has nothing whatever to do with the Greek belief in the essential immortality of the soul (Ch. 32). It happens because Easter happened, and it is exclusively confined to those who confess Christ (I Cor. 15:23). But it must not be conceived as a resurrection of the flesh, as though the conditions of our life before death



were to be reconstituted (Ch. 58), but is to be associated with a change from which even those who remain alive are not exempt." [59]

56 William Robinson, *The Evanston Theme: Christ The Hope of the World* (The Bethany Press), pp. 22ff.

57 find. (Italics supplied.)

58 Ethelbert Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, p. 212. (Italics supplied.) Note that Stauffer cites several Apocryphal references.

### **7. Wesleyan's Spurrier—Rejects Platonic Soul Separation**

Brief note must be taken of theologian WILLIAM A. SPURRIER, [60] of the Wesleyan University, in Connecticut. He likewise rejects both Platonic immortality, with its dualistic separation of body and soul, the soul being freed from the body at death; and the Hindu concept as well, that of the soul as fading out at death and being reabsorbed into the Universal Soul. According to Scripture, man is, instead, a unitary organism. Here is Dr. Spurrier's view:

"Christianity does not believe in immortality in the Platonic sense of the word. Christianity does not believe that man, after death, is raised up and absorbed into some divine mind. We do not believe that the body and soul are two absolutely distinct entities which are separated at death. Immortality in much of Greek philosophy usually means that the soul or mind is thus freed from the body and is then united with the divine soul or mind of the universe. Immortality, for Plotinus, for example, means absorption into the divine mind or, for Plato, man achieves the role of a thinking spectator above and beyond the earthly life." [61]

Such, Spurrier points out, is the "basic difference" between the Platonic and Christian views. Neither does Christianity accord with the Oriental concept of reabsorption, and becoming "lost in immortality, even lost in God." Biblical eternal life definitely retains "the individual, unique personality." [62] Here, then, is another Episcopalian scholar thinking along similar lines with a host of others.

59 Ibid., p. 217. (Italics supplied.)

60 WILLIAM A. SPURRIER (1916- ), Episcopalian, was trained at Williams College and Union Theological Seminary. After a period as instructor in religion at Amherst he became instructor and then professor of religion at Wesleyan University (1956- ), and also college pastor at the university. He was an Army chaplain in World War II. He is author of two books.

61 William A. Spurrier, *Guide to the Christian Faith* (Scribner's), p. 157. (Italics supplied.)

62 Ibid., pp. 157, 158.

### **8. Union's Brown—Not Greek Innate Immortality but Resurrection**

Presbyterian ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN, [63] of Union Theological Seminary, in his *The Bible Speaks to You*, in chapter seventeen, "The Facts of Life—and Death," has a significant section titled "Why Not 'Immortality of the Soul'?" This, Brown urges, should be "examined," because many people "confuse it with the Christian answer." Concerning the subtleties of Greek Immortal-Soulism, he states:

"It ['immortality of the soul'] comes from the Greeks, and when Greek thought and Hebrew-Christian thought came into contact in the Early Church, the Greek view often seemed to predominate. This view says, in effect, that there is a portion of me, my soul, that will continue to exist. During my lifetime here on earth this immortal soul is lodged in my mortal body. What happens at death is that my body dies and turns to dust, while my immortal soul is released and made free so that it can continue its immortal existence without being hamstrung by confinement in a body." [64]

1. GREEK AND BIBLICAL CONCEPTS IN TOTAL CONFLICT.—The Greeks considered the body a "nuisance," "the prison house of the soul." Earthly life was regarded as "an unpleasant interlude in the life of the soul," to be done with "as quickly as possible." In fact, the whole "aim of life" was to "get rid" of the body "in order to resume a free and unfettered existence in eternity." But, says Brown, according to the Bible, "we have been created by God for fellowship with him"—and "eternal relationship with him." [65] Then he adds:

"The Bible also takes it for granted that something has gone wrong. Our sin, that is, our persistent desire to place ourselves rather than God at the centre of life, has disrupted the relationship and seriously hampered its fulfillment both as a present reality and as a future possibility. It is for this reason that the Biblical writers stress a notion that is difficult for us to understand—the

connection between sin and death. Sin is a way of talking about the fact that our relationship with God has broken to pieces. Death is a way of talking about the fact that life itself has broken to pieces, life which was God-given. Both sin and death thus stand as threats to the relationship between man and God." [66]

63 ROBERT McAfee BROWN (1920- ), Presbyterian, was trained in Amherst. Union Theological, Columbia, and then Oxford. After a period as Navy chaplain in the Pacific, he taught philosophy at Amherst, then systematic theology at Union. was chairman of the Department of Religion at Macalester, and then went to Union Theological Seminary as professor of religion. He is author of *The Bible Speaks to You*, and other works.

64 Robert McAfee Brown, *The Bible Speaks to You* (Copyright 1955, W. L. Jenkins. The Westminster Press. Used by permission.), p. 331.

But beyond the grave comes resurrection. That changes everything.

2. PAUL'S EMPHASIS ON RESURRECTION, NOT SOUL SURVIVAL.—Turning then to the message of St. Paul, Brown says:

"He [Paul] does not talk about 'immortality of the soul' as though only part of us were significant to God. He talks about 'resurrection of the body,' suggesting that our bodies are important in God's sight. I am not a total personality without my body. Neither are you. The body is a part of what makes me me, and you you." [67]

65 Ibid., pp. 221, 222.

66 Ibid., p. 222.

67 Ibid., p. 226. (Italics supplied.)

68 Ibid., p. 228.

Stressing the fact that "eternal life" is by "resurrection" Brown adds:

"Rather than speaking of immortality of the soul, the New Testament, as we have seen, speaks of eternal life as something that will be accomplished by the power of God: who will raise up and transform the total personality of the individual. not just the soul, but all that is distinctive about him. Both Old and New Testament agree that the body and soul cannot be split apart. They are not two very different ingredients, poorly fused together. They form a unity, We are 'psychosomatic' persons (psyche-soul, stoma-body). We are not just one or the other; we are both, together and indissolubly." [69]

We have a "foretaste" of eternal life now, because "eternal life is a partial reality here and now" —the "new life" in Christ in preparation for eternal life forever. Such was Brown's view. [70]

### **9. Switzerland's Kraemer—Innatism Not Biblical but Greek**

Dutch theologian and linguist HENDRIK KRAEMER, for years director of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Switzerland, has linked man's immortality with the "restoration of the image" of God in man through the "resurrection." This he holds to be the "only ground" of "eternal life." Stressing the "indissoluble unity" of man's nature, he arraigns the current popular "indestructibility of the soul" contention as not Biblical, but Greek in origin. Kraemer is very explicit concerning the terms of this conflict.

69 Ibid., p. 229. (Italics supplied.)

70 Ibid., p. 230.

"The belief in immortality, in the way it is held now almost universally in Christendom, is not Biblical. It is of Greek origin and is, accordingly, always taken in the sense of the soul being indestructible, whereas the body is destined to decay. This is contrary to the teaching of the Bible, for two reasons. In the first place because it ignores entirely the Biblical assumption that man as soul and body is an indissoluble unity.

"In the second place, because it is said plainly in the Bible that God 'is that blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality' (1 Tim. 6:16). This indestructibility of the soul rests on the Greek idea that the soul is of divine essence, which conflicts again with the Biblical teaching of man, created in the Image of God, as a created soul and body." [71]

### **10. Presbyterian Bible Lesson Presents "Immortality Through Christ"**

Dr. MURRAY NEWMAN, [72] of the faculty of the Protestant Episcopal Seminary of Alexandria, Virginia, impressively presents the true nature and source of our immortality and the time of its reception. This he does in Lesson 14 ("The Life of the World to Come"), in the Westminster Uniform Lessons, for September 30, 1956. It was thus prepared for widespread Bible-class study and appeared in Crossroads, denominational organ of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

1. RESURRECTION IS GUARANTEE OF LIFE TO COME.—Discussing the "triumph of life over death," Newman comes to the section, "The Foundation of Eternal Life," and its "essential nature." [73] He first lays down this premise for the lesson:

"The foundation of the life to come is God's act in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Because Christ died and rose again, the Christian believer who dies will also be raised again." [74]

foundation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This validates everything that went before—his life, his ministry, his death. How is it, therefore, that any Christian can deny the resurrection of the dead? (V. 12.) Those who through faith are united with Christ can never be separated from him; they will certainly be raised in a resurrection like his. The resurrection of Christ is God's guarantee of life in the world to come for the faithful." [75]

71 Hendrik Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith*, p. 327. (Italics supplied.)

72 MURRAY NEWMAN (1924- ), Episcopalian, received his training in Phillips University, Union Seminary, and the universities of Basel and Heidelberg. He has held professorial positions at Vassar and Smith colleges and Union Seminary. He is a contributor to the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*.

73 Murray Newman "Lesson 14—The Life of the World to Come," *Crossroads*, July-September, 1956, p. 80. (copyright 1956, W. L. Jenkins, Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Used by permission.)

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

2. IMMORTALITY IS FROM GOD, NOT MAN.—Coming to the crucial section, "Resurrection vs. Immortality," Dr. Newman sets forth the mutually destructive conflict between Greek innatism and the Biblical truth of life through resurrection. He says:

"It is of real significance that the Christian view of the future life is that of resurrection rather than of [inherent] immortality. The Apostles' Creed reads: 'I believe ... in the resurrection of the body.' In so doing, it keeps faith with the Biblical tradition. The idea of [innate] immortality comes from Greek philosophy and has its rootage in the assumption that the world is comprised of a good spiritual realm and an evil material realm. Man, according to this interpretation, is essentially a good soul imprisoned in an evil body. Man's highest end in life, therefore, is to escape the evil body. The Christian faith would have none of this. The New Testament Christians, following in the Old Testament tradition, viewed the entirety of the world—spirit and matter—as created by God and therefore good. The most profound expression of this faith is the Creation story in Genesis, chapter 1." [76]

3. REDEMPTION OF THE WHOLE MAN.—Contrasting next the Greek depreciation of the body, Newman presents the New Testament position and the relation of sin and redemption thereto:

"Man as created by God is good—body and soul. True, the Biblical tradition knows the corruption that sin has brought to man, but this cannot be simply identified with the fact that he has a body. Sin has corrupted the total man, body and soul, and the total man stands in need of redemption. With Christ this redemption has come, and through Christ the whole person will experience a transformation in the future life. This transformation the New Testament calls resurrection." [77]

4. LIFE BECAUSE OF GOD, NOT OF MAN.—The fundamental fallacy of the Greek concept of innate, indefeasible immortality is then depicted, and God is presented as the sole source of life and immortality:

"For the Greeks the soul of a man was regarded as an eternal sub-stance, and consequently it contained within itself the power for tart-an-a life after the dissolution of the body. For Christians such an idea was unthinkable. 'Only God is eternal by nature, and man is his creature, completely dependent upon his power. God alone has the power to grant life in this world and in the world to come. If there is eternal life, it will be because of what God is and not because of what man is.'" [78]

76 Ibid., pp. 80, 81. (Italics supplied.)

77 Ibid., p. 81.

78 Ibid. (Italics supplied.)

Such was the clear scriptural teaching of the Presbyterian Sunday school lesson for September 30, 1956, in Crossroads, written by Dr. Newman.

### **11. Hooke of London—Greek Inherent Immortality Not in Bible**

Former professor of Old Testament studies at the University of London, S. H. HOOKE, [79] after stressing the Biblical emphasis on the resurrection-life, concurs with Prof. H. Wheeler Robinson (Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, pp. 101, 102), and pinpoints the first appearance of the Greek Innate Immortality doctrine in Jewish circles as found in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon. He likewise declares it to be not only unscriptural but also missing from the early creeds:

"The form in which the Church received and has continued to hold the belief in resurrection was, and has remained, Jewish. The late Professor H. Wheeler Robinson has well remarked, in this connection: 'It is a life on earth, however new its conditions, and it is a resurrection-life, involving the restoration of the dead body. This form of belief is seen to have been inevitable, once we have grasped the Hebrew idea of personality; a resurrection of the body was the only form of triumph over death which Hebrew psychology could conceive for those actually dead. Even St. Paul shrinks from the thought of bodiless existence.' (Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 101-2.)" [80]

Innate Immortality has no support in Scripture:

"The Greek doctrine of immortality, which finds its first Jewish expression in the Wisdom of Solomon, and which conceives of an immortality of the soul apart from the body, does not occur in the New Testament, nor in the Creeds. Even the Alexandrian Fathers appear to assume the identity of the 'spiritual body' spoken of by St. Paul with the earthly body, without, however, explaining the nature of the identity." [81]

79 SAMUEL HENRY HOOKE was trained at Oxford, Glasgow, and Uppsala. He became professor of Old Testament studies, University of London, and president of Society for Old Testament Studies. He is author of thirteen books.

80 S. H. Hooke, The Siege Perilous, p. 201.

81 Ibid.

### **12. Oral Declaration of Late Keswick Teacher, W. Graham Scroggie**

I close this chapter with the recital of a cherished personal visit to the home of Dr. W. Graham Scroggie, at Wimbledon, on the outskirts of London. It was on December 22, 1957, a little more than a year before his death. But let me first sketch the life of this outstanding Bible teacher. Dr. Scroggie was trained for the Baptist ministry at Spur-geon's College. This was followed by pastorates at Leyton-stone (1889-1903) and Halifax (1902-1905). Then, after two years of intensive personal study of the Word, he passed through a spiritual crisis—his "Arabia" he called it—which became the turning point in his lifework. There he learned and experienced "the vital distinction between the Saviour-ship and the Master-ship of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Scroggie emerged, in 1907, to enter upon a Bible-teaching ministry for which he became known throughout the English-speaking world. After ten years at the Bethesda Free church, in 1916 he began his memorable ministry at Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh—a city noted for outstanding preachers—with his famed Bible schools, from which one hundred lay preachers emerged. This was followed by extensive preaching tours in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States and Canada. His final pastorate was a seven-year period in the famous Spurgeon Metropolitan Tabernacle in London (1938-1944).

82 The Keswick Conventions are annual gatherings of Evangelical Christians for prayer. Bible study, and addresses. The plan started in 1875. Each convention lasts for a week and attracts visitors from many countries. Their purpose is to promote practical

godliness and the deeper spiritual life. Their motto is "All One in Christ Jesus." They are similar to the Northfield Conferences in North America, started by Dwight L. Moody.

Meantime, Dr. Scroggie was in increasing demand as a Bible teacher to the thousands who thronged the annual Keswick Conventions. [82] His first appearance at Keswick was in 1912. And at these he was the leading speaker for no fewer than twelve conventions—more than any other participant in Keswick history. He was likewise a special lecturer at Spurgeon's and other colleges. He was also a prolific writer, with some thirty books and pamphlets to his credit.

I had known Dr. Scroggie for some time, having visited in his London home in 1948. Periodically we exchanged letters. He was very fond of my *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* volumes, being personally instrumental in placing sets in the hands of several religious leaders in Britain. Learning of this new intensive research writing assignment on the nature and destiny of man, in which I was already engaged, he asked for more information about my early findings.

Accordingly he was sent a copy of *Questions on Doctrine*, in which I had marked the section headed "Champions on Conditionalism Span the Centuries." It gave terse citations from more than sixty leading Conditionalists, from Luther and Tyndale onward to contemporary times. These sketches deeply interested Dr. Scroggie, and he asked for samples of larger write-ups, which were sent to him. One was a comprehensive sketch on Archbishop William Temple's remarkable witness. He had followed the developing evidence with keenest interest.

Upon reaching London again, in December of 1957, I telephoned Dr. Scroggie at his home to tell him that I was in the city for a time, intensively searching for the works of other Conditionalist writers in the British Museum and other libraries. When the message was relayed to him Dr. Scroggie said, "Tell him I want to see him." I promised to come the next Sunday afternoon, December 22. Reaching his home at the stated hour, I was soon ushered into his bedroom. He was elderly, ill, and in bed. But his mind was crystal clear and the warmth of his greeting was touching.

He was sitting up in bed with the marked copy of *Questions on Doctrine* on his updrawn knees, opened to the "Conditionalist Champions" section. He knew what these men believed and stood for. As I approached him Dr. Scroggie grasped my hand and said with deep earnestness: "Brother Froom, I believe that God has raised you up for this great task. I am praying for you every day. You may quote me whenever and wherever you please as being a believer in Conditionalism."

The words were etched into my memory. His statement was spontaneous, clear, and voluntary. It was unexpected, as there had been no discussion. We had not yet begun our conversation, nor had I made any further report on my findings. His declaration sprang from the evidence marshalled in that chapter and expanded in the larger write-ups sent him. He listened with intense interest to the story of my further findings to date. Never shall I forget the parting prayer of this godly man as I knelt by his bedside while he besought God's guiding hand to be over me and my task, giving me strength to complete it—and then to make the printed presentation a great blessing to the church at large, when it should be sent forth. And how eagerly the good doctor awaited it, as he bade me *Godspeed!*

Such is the cherished testimony of this great Baptist Bible teacher. This is the first time the story of this interview has been put into print, though it has deeply impressed those to whom it has been related orally. How he longed to see the completed volume. He was assuredly one of the Conditionalist witnesses of this decade, though reaching his conclusions late in life." [83]

Had Dr. Scroggie lived, he would doubtless have declared himself in print on the basic principles of Conditionalism, which were now a matter of conviction with him.

83 It is desirable to note that Dr. Scroggie's interest in Conditionalism began prior to May 31, 1956, for on that date he wrote the president of the British Conditional Immortality Association, and editor of *Words of Life*, F. W. Sceats, asking for his tracts, the *Teachings of Conditionatism*, the *Source of Immortality*, the *Rich Man and Lazarus*, and the *Roman Catholic Doctrine of Hell*. Dr. Scroggie also stated in his letter that the Conditionalist book by Eric Lewis *Life and Immortality*, "should not be allowed to be out of print." (Letter from W. Granam Scroggie to F. W. Sceats, dated "31/05/1956; 15 Belvedere Drive, Wimbledon S.N. 19"). The able book by Lewis, with which Scroggie was obviously acquainted, was printed in Boston. So Dr. Scroggie was actively interested in Conditionalism at least a year and a half prior to his contacts with me, and had a reading acquaintance with its tenets, according to historical record.