



**"Meditate  
upon these things;  
give thyself  
wholly to them;  
that thy profiting  
may appear unto all"**

**I Timothy 4:15**

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# **Journal of Theology**

**Church of the Lutheran Confession**

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## THE TRUE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

Many years ago the undersigned read a feature story in the Christmas issue of a daily newspaper under the title: The Boy Of Nazareth.

After their return from Egypt - so the tale ran - Joseph and Mary with their child settled in the village of Nazareth in Galilee, where they had lived before the birth of their child. They had many friends and relatives in Nazareth, and this is the place where their child grew up. Jesus was about four years old at this time. He was an extraordinary child. He honored his father and mother and held them in love and esteem, serving and obeying them. At no time did he show disrespect for his parents; he obeyed them in all things. Like every other child in the village he played with the other children. He was always kind, considerate, and courteous toward them. For example, he was not a child who took possession of all of the toys of the other children. He was altogether unselfish. When the boy reached the proper age his parents sent him to the synagogue school of the village. Here again he showed himself an extraordinary child. He was always a model pupil and the delight of his teachers. He waxed strong in spirit. He grew physically, mentally, and spiritually and was filled with wisdom.

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### Editor's Note:

The profound truths of Christmas are not best expressed in the technical language of scientific theological propositions, nor in the symbolic jargon of a false social activism, but in the simple Credo of confessing Christian hearts.

There is a theology which disdains our Christmas message as simplistic and atavistic. We on our part thank the author who, in the spirit of Zacharias, here guides our thoughts in the true way of peace as we again approach the Manger in Bethlehem.

When he was twelve years old, his parents took him along to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When the parents left for the return journey to Nazareth, their child stayed behind in Jerusalem. The parents knew nothing of this and supposed that he was in the company of others who were returning from Jerusalem at the same time. So the parents looked for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. When they did not find him, they turned back to Jerusalem, looking everywhere for him. Finally after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, or Rabbis, listening to them and asking them questions. All those that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. They were amazed; they had never seen anything like this before. The boy was an extraordinary boy in every way. But, after all, just a boy.

This, as I remember it, was the sum and substance of that Christmas story that I read many many years ago.

We, too, know - and every believer knows - the boy of Nazareth; but we know that he was more than just a boy. We know first of all the Babe of Bethlehem. Who is that Babe?

Let us go back four thousand years before his birth at Bethlehem and consult chapters one and two of Genesis. In chapter one, we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In the beginning of time the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, made out of nothing heaven and earth and all things therein, both visible and invisible. He made them in six ordinary days of twenty-four hours each. Of the second person in the Godhead St. John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1ff). In verse 14 John says of this Word: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Thus St. John, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, tells us

that the Babe in Bethlehem was and is this eternal Word. By Him, the Babe of Bethlehem, were all things made.

On the sixth day, God by the Word created man, male and female created He them. Adam was formed out of the dust of the ground. The woman was created out of the bone of the man, Adam. We note above all that God created man in His own image, after His likeness; that means, perfectly holy and righteous, altogether without sin. Then God planted a beautiful park-like garden known as the Garden of Eden. Here man, who had been created unto life, was to live and work until God would translate him into everlasting life. Adam and Eve were permitted to eat of every tree and of every fruit of the garden, with one exception. God said to them, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." But what happened? The greatest tragedy this world has ever witnessed, or will ever witness.

In chapter three we read that the serpent came to Eve. In this serpent was disguised the Old Serpent, the Tempter, the devil whom the Scripture calls a liar and the father of lies, the murderer from the beginning. He was once a good angel, one of the invisible creatures that God made during the six days of creation. He was one of "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, (whom God) reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day," (Jude 6). The devil approached the woman for the purpose of destroying her. God had said, "In the day that you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely die." The Tempter said, That is not true; you shall not surely die. God knows that very well. On the contrary, your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Eve permitted herself to be led to doubt the Word of God and then to reject the Word of God and to believe the lie. She took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and ate, and then gave of the fruit to her husband and he also did eat. Through this one sinful act of

disobedience Adam and Eve separated themselves from God and everlasting life. Instead of life they had nothing to look forward to except everlasting death. But God in His great mercy did not separate Himself from His creatures. He went after them and sought them in order to save them from everlasting death. He told them their sin in order to lead them to repentance, and then He told them of the Savior, who would deliver them from death and in whom they would find full forgiveness of their sin. He gave them the promise in His judgment upon the Serpent: "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). The woman's seed is the Babe of Bethlehem, born of a woman; the Deliverer from death, hell, and Satan. Adam and Eve believed the promise. They believed in the woman's seed, the Babe of Bethlehem. We see this from Genesis 4:1, where Eve says of her first born son, Cain, "I have gotten a man, the Lord." Luther translates this verse, "Ich habe den Mann, den Herrn." In other words, Eve thought that her first-born was the promised seed of the woman. We know, of course, that she was mistaken; but her words tell us that she believed the promise.

In Genesis 4:26 we read that in the days of Enos men began to call upon the name of the Lord; that is, they began to publicly proclaim the name of the Lord. We know that this name is none other than that of the Babe of Bethlehem. "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). In the name of the Babe of Bethlehem alone there is salvation. This salvation was proclaimed from generation to generation by the godly descendants of Adam and Eve, down to the coming of the flood. Noah was the last preacher of righteousness before the destruction of the first world through the flood.

By this time the whole world had fallen away from God. The wickedness of man was great and the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. God determined to destroy man and every beast and every

creeping thing and all the fowls of the air. Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives alone found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a just man and upright in his generation and walked with God. He believed in the Babe of Bethlehem. St. Peter tells us that he was a preacher of righteousness, the righteousness that the Babe of Bethlehem would earn for us. For a period of one hundred and twenty years Noah preached the righteousness of Christ, the Babe of Bethlehem. He preached this righteousness by word and by deed.

After the flood he continued as a preacher of righteousness. As far as we know, this one promise, given to Adam and Eve after their fall, sufficed to sustain and continue the people of God in the saving faith throughout the period preceding the flood and for some one hundred years after the flood. During all these years - perhaps 18 centuries - young and old could celebrate Christmas in anticipation and rejoice in the Savior-God, the seed of the woman, the Babe of Bethlehem.

To the patriarchs after the flood the promise was made more definite, declaring that the Savior would come from the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When God called Abraham, He gave him the promise, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," (Gen. 12:2, 3). Later God repeated this promise, saying to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," (Gen. 22:18). And Abraham believed the Lord and His promise, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6). The same promise was given to Abraham's son, Isaac (Gen. 26:4), and to Isaac's son, Jacob (Gen. 28:14). To Jacob was granted the further knowledge that the Promised Seed would spring from the tribe of Judah. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be," (Gen. 49:10). Referring to this seed, the Apostle Paul tells us:

"Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ," the Babe of Bethlehem (Gal. 3:16).

It was this Seed who appeared to Moses in the burning bush. It was this Seed who spoke to Moses, "Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you," (Ex. 3:14). The Babe of Bethlehem is the great I AM. To the unbelieving Jews, who prided themselves that they were the children of Abraham according to the flesh, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM," (John 8:58). To King David, God gave the promise, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever...and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever" (II Sam. 7:12-16). In this promise, the seed of David is none other than the Babe of Bethlehem. Of Him the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary, "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33).

Moses and David spoke of the office of the Babe of Bethlehem. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). In Psalm 110, David speaks of Him as King and High Priest. In Psalm 24 David rejoices in this King and sings, even as we do today when we celebrate Christmas:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
and the King of Glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of Glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,

the Lord mighty in battle.  
 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
 even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;  
 and the King of Glory shall come in.  
 Who is this King of Glory?

The Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory."

The prophets of God, beginning with Isaiah, have very much to say about the Babe of Bethlehem. Isaiah 7:14 reads, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." What this means is explained in Matthew 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," true God and true man in one person. We can almost hear the believers of that time singing, "Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear." In Chapter 9 of Isaiah, we are told, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even forever." The believers of that time could rejoice and sing:

"To us a Child of hope is born,  
 To us a Son is given,  
 And on His shoulder ever rests  
 All power in earth and heaven.  
 His name shall be the Prince of Peace,  
 The everlasting Lord,  
 The Wonderful, the Counselor,  
 The God by all adored.  
 His righteous government and power  
 Shall over all extend;  
 On judgement and on justice based,  
 His reign shall have no end." (L.H. 106, 4-6).



The prophet Micah gives the birthplace of Jesus when he says, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," (5:2). And finally the last prophet, Malachi, records the promise, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; 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," (3:1). The Babe of Bethlehem is the Messenger of the Covenant, the Son of God, come down from heaven and born of a woman. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4f). And in that old, but ever new, story of Christmas, St. Luke tells us when God sent forth His Son, made of a woman:

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

"And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David; to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear

not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (Luke 2:1-20).

Just as the believers of the Old Testament looked forward to and rejoiced in the Babe of Bethlehem who was to come and thus celebrated Christmas in a God-pleasing manner and to their own salvation, so we believers of the New Testament look back to the Babe of Bethlehem and rejoice in Him as our Savior and thus celebrate Christmas in a God-pleasing manner and to our own salvation. Standing at the manger of Bethlehem's stable, we confess with the whole Christian Church on earth the words of Luther explaining the Second Article of the Apostle's Creed:

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord;

Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death;

That I should be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; even as He is risen from death, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true."

This is the true story of Christmas, from the time of Adam and Eve through the centuries to the present day.

George Tiefel Sr.



The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is published at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, by authorization of the Church Of The Lutheran Confession.

Subscriptions: \$3.00 per year, \$5.50 for 2 years, payable in advance.

Issues are dated: March, May, July, October, December.

Editor: Prof. E. Schaller, 513 W. Grover Rd.  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701

Editorial Staff: C.M. Gullerud; J. Lau.

Contributing Editors: A. Schulz; Geo. Tiefel.

All correspondence, including subscriptions, renewals and changes of address, should be directed to the Editor.

# ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

## WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TEACH CONCERNING THE SOUL?\*

### I.

If we wish to answer this question, it is first of all necessary to be informed concerning the meaning of the word "soul" as it is used in Scripture. When we begin by taking up the Old Testament, we meet the word "soul" for the first time in the account concerning the creation of the first people (Gen. 2:7). There we read: "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." Obviously in this first passage the word is not used in its actual (eigentliche) sense, but in a transferred (übertragene) sense: "person, being." In Gen. 9:4-5 we find the same Hebrew word (nephesch) used in the sense of "life;" in v. 4 concerning the life of animals and in v. 5 concerning the life of man. But it would lead us too far afield to consider here all the different meanings from the individual passages. We shall content ourselves with the four points presented by Gesenius concerning nephesch: 1. Breath; breath of life; 2. Life, vital principle, the principle giving life to the body (Greek: ψυχή ; Latin: anima), evidenced by

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\* This article is published in Vol. 56 (1910) of the theological magazine Lehre und Wehre, pp. 262-276 and 308-314. It deals with a subject particularly timely in our day. The translation is provided by Pastor A. Schulz, who asks that acknowledgment be made of the valuable help supplied by the now sainted Pastor Chr. Albrecht in the work on the first half of the essay. - Ed.

breathing (or breath); - further in regard to all functions by which life is preserved or refreshed, or the opposite: suffers, is endangered; 3. Rational soul, disposition, heart, especially as seat of the emotions, affections and inner reactions of various kinds; 4. Living organism; actually that wherein there is life or soul (nephesch). - Fuerst similarly defines this word, and adds: "Its use for person, living being, man, or even slave, is the same as in German." It is derived from the verb naphasch - to breathe, to live. Leopold says the same thing in his small Handlexicon. - From the foregoing it is evident that nothing specific or more definite concerning the human soul can be concluded from this word and its manifold usages.

Since by the word "soul" in its actual sense we understand the "spirit" dwelling within the body, as is certainly the case also in Scripture, we turn to this word. The Hebrew term is "ruach," and we meet this word already in Gen. 1:2, where as "ruach elohim" it signifies the Spirit of God, according to the ancient exposition: the Third Person in the Godhead. While the word means "breath, wind, snort," it is also used in the same sense as nephesch for "life" and "soul" (anima), as well as for animus as "spirit, disposition, way of thinking, will, and decision" (according to Gesenius). But also from this word nothing definite can be deduced concerning the human soul (spirit), since it is used of the "spirit of the beast" as well as of the "spirit of man." As evidence for this we need only point to Eccl. 3: 19ff. (This so often misused and misunderstood passage will be given closer consideration in the course of this study). The term comes from the verb ruach - to breathe, blow.

We find yet a third word in the Old Testament which means "soul," and which under certain presuppositions can perhaps give us a little more information concerning the essence of the human soul. The word is "neschamah" (in stat. constr. nischmath). The indicated presupposition is that this word, in a passage yet to be considered, cannot refer to animals, but only to humans. It derives from the verb nascham - to pant, breathe. According to Gesenius it

denotes: 1. Panting used especially of God's anger (2 Sam. 22:16; Ps. 18:15); as well as God's life-giving, spirit-giving breath (Job 33:4); 2. Breath; the enlivening principle in human bodies; 3. Living being - nephesch; 4. A rational soul. - According to Fuerst it denotes "above all the rational soul." Leopold remarks under the designation "spiritus": Dei, hominis.

Since this word appears only 24 times in the Old Testament, I have compared the individual passages. The result is as follows: 1) Neschamah is spoken seven times of God; it denotes the spirit proceeding from God, partly as enlivening, quickening, enlightening, and again as destroying and punishing. These seven passages are: Job 4:9; 32:8; 33:4; 37:10; Isa. 30:33; 2 Sam. 22:16; Ps. 18:15. - 2) In 16 passages it is unquestionably used of man. In all of these passages it can be translated very well with "spirit, soul." In two of these passages (Isa. 2:22 and Dan. 10:17) it could perhaps be more suitably translated with "breath" (Atem); and yet "spirit" or "soul" are closer to the Hebrew meaning. Seb. Schmid (Bibl. Lat.) renders it in both places with spiritus, resp. anima. These 16 passages are: Gen. 2:7; Deut. 20:16 (cp. v. 18; Joshua 11:11, 14); Joshua 10:40 (cp. Deut. 20:16); Joshua 11:11, 14; 1 Kings 15:29; 17:17; Job 26:4; 27:3; 34:14; Ps. 150:6; Isa. 2:22; 42:5; 57:16; Dan. 10:17; Prov. 20:27. - 3) It may be debatable whether the 24th passage, Gen. 7:22, refers to men and animals, or only to men. In such doubtful cases the exegetical rule would apply that common usage must decide the question. And common usage determines that also here neschamah is to be understood only of men. For we have seen that the word in all other passages (where it is not used of God) is used of men, but is not used of animals. On this basis, therefore, there can no longer be any doubt but that also Gen. 7:22 refers to men. Furthermore, we note that immediately before (v. 21) man is last mentioned, and in connection with this word the text continues (v. 22): "Omnis qui (masculine; not omne quod, neuter) habebat nischmath ruach chajim in naribus suis." By this emphatic addition the Holy Ghost would doubtless stress that not even one

single person who still had his soul in a body escaped the judgment of the flood. Moreover, the wording clearly points to Gen. 2:7 (inspiravit in nares eius nischmath chajim), where the creation of man is described. Common usage, context, and wording (parallelism) are three important witnesses; and the unanimous testimony of these three is that in Gen. 7:22 neschamah can be understood only of men. - 4) From what has been said it is clear that neschamah is used only in regard to God and men, but never in regard to animals. This brings two thoughts to mind: First, the fact that it is used only of God and men shows that a certain similarity exists between the spirit of God and the spirit of man. This is also confirmed by the Scripture doctrine that God created man in His image and for immortality, also endowing him with the ability to know God. Second, the exclusive use of this word stresses the difference between the souls of animals and the souls of men: the Holy Ghost does not designate both with neschamah, but only the soul of man. Therefore a difference must exist between them. These preliminary conclusions from the word itself are abundantly confirmed by the predicates which we find in Scripture in connection with this word.

Still, before we examine the more precise expressions of individual passages of the Old Testament, let us see in what sense the words "soul" and "spirit" are used in the New Testament.

The New Testament word for soul is  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ , which corresponds to the Hebrew nephesch (with but few exceptions, the Septuagint has consistently translated nephesch with  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ .) It is derived from  $\psi\upsilon\chi\omega$  - to breathe. Cuneus traces it back to a Sanskrit root sphu - blow. It denotes first of all the breath of animal life. Already in the usage of Homer  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  meant "the life in the separate individual being, specifically man." (Cremer, Dictionary). In Plato (and since) "the thought expanded, so that  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  demanded the ethical individuality of man continuing after death" (Ibid.). "So also the Greek  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  means the same as nephesch, and the Septuagint can use the word without

further ado." This usage of ψυχή in the Greek Old Testament is followed closely in the New Testament. Here it denotes: 1) Rev. 8:9 and 16:3, obviously individual animal beings; 2) in Old Testament quotations (Matt. 12:18), God: the Father as a special Person, distinguished from the Son and the Holy Ghost; 3) In the remaining passages it is used of men, a) signifying the individual's own life (Matt. 2:20; Rom. 11:3; Matt. 20:28; Acts 27:10, 22; et alii; b) as the subject of life - person, the ego (Matt. 10:28: ψυχὴ over against σῶμα; Matt. 16:24: εἰαυτόν, cp. Luke 14:26: τὴν εἰαυτοῦ ψυχὴν; Matt. 16:26 and Mark 8:36: τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, cp. Luke 9:25: εἰαυτόν), and including those in this life as well as in that which is to come (Rev. 6:9). - From this comparison it follows for our purpose that ψυχή, when it is used of man, can signify the natural earthly life (of man) as well as the whole (entire) person, the I of man. The respective context in each instance sufficiently explains the meaning of the word.

The other word of the New Testament which comes into consideration here is πνεῦμα - spirit. It is derived from πνέω - blow, to breathe; "It corresponds completely to the Hebrew ruach" (Ibid.). Where πνεῦμα is not used in the physical sense - wind (Hebr. 1:7),\* or of God (2 Thess. 2:8: τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον), it denotes concerning man: 1) the soul, as a synonym of ψυχή (Luke 8:55: ἐπέστρεψεν τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς; James 2:26: σῶμα χωρὶς πνεύματος νεκρόν; cp. Matt. 27:50; Acts 7:59. Add to that Luke 1:46: μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχὴ μου with v. 47: τὸ πνεῦμά μου; also John 12:27 with 13:21;) 2) Especially the essential self-conscious inwardness; that which lives in man in contrast to his σῶμα, his σὰρξ; cp. 1 Cor. 5:5; Rom. 8:10, 11; 1 Pet. 4:6; 1 Cor. 2:11; especially 2 Cor. 12:2, 3; Rev. 1:10; 21:10.

Cremer explains: "If we bear in mind that soul and spirit can well be distinguished, but not separated like soul

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\* The reference is evidently to Luther's translation of Ps. 104:4. Ed.



and body, or spirit and body, then we will have to differentiate between  $\piνεῦμα$  (ruach) as the life principle, and  $\psiυχή$  (nephesch) as the subject of life; the soul however bears the  $\piνεῦμα$  in itself..... As far as the relationship of  $\piνεῦμα$  and  $καρδία$  is concerned, ..... the relationship may clearly be stated in the following manner: The spirit, principle; the soul, subject; the heart, center and organ of life." (l.c., p. 887f.) From this it is to be concluded that  $\piνεῦμα$  in man denotes that spirit of life breathed into him by God (cp. Rev. 11:11), the actual life-principle, which even in German cannot always be called "Seele," but is immanent in the soul, that by which the soul lives. Only by means of the predicates in each reference to the human  $\piνεῦμα$  can the exact meaning be perceived. Yet it is a remarkable circumstance, which deserves full consideration, that in the entire New Testament  $\piνεῦμα$  is never used of animals. Where it denotes a living being, it is affirmed either concerning God or men.

## II.

After these preliminary remarks we now proceed to the real answer to our question by assembling several of the statements of Scripture concerning the human soul (spirit) as defined by the designations listed above. The first thing we must establish on the basis of Scripture (though to a Christian it seems self-evident) is the truth that man has a soul or spirit distinct from the body. All doubt is immediately removed when we note the brief account concerning the creation of man: Gen. 2:7: God "formed (jazar) man of the dust (afar) of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and so (vav consecutive) man became a living soul." - "Hebrew scholars note that in the word vajjizer there is a double yodh (though according to the rule there should be a single yodh and a double zere), in order to indicate a two-fold creation of man: the earthly creation of the body and the heavenly creation of the soul.... Concerning the body it

is stated: the Lord formed it; concerning the soul, it is stated: He breathed it in; naphach actually means: He blew in, breathed (Isa. 54:16). These words figuratively describe the creation of the rational soul, as even Alcuin states. For it says that God blew into him the spirit of life, that is, the soul, which gave life, feeling and movement to the body, so that through this blowing-in man became a living soul, a living creature; that he would partake of spiritual life through the soul, which is the life-principle, 1 Cor. 15:45." (Gerhard, Commentary on Genesis.) Since the Holy Ghost here describes first the creation or formation of the body and then the filling of the body with the spirit of life, he shows thereby that man was a being composed of two entirely different parts. The body was formed from the ground; after the body was finished, there was still no life in it; only then did God create the soul (the spirit) and gave to it the body for a dwelling and organ. It is not stated whether the soul was also created from some previously existing substance; but through the "blowing in" or "breathing" the impression is given that the spirit was brought forth out of nothing by a direct act of creation, as well as that the body began to live and move only when the spirit of life entered it. Thus everything indicates that the soul is an essence entirely separate from the body, not needing the body for its existence.

Over against the misconception that the spirit of life was an out-flowing of God's essence, and that thus pantheism is here taught, it is briefly to be remarked that such a view contradicts all teaching of Scripture. If we were in essence children of God, as is God the Son, and if the breathing in, resp. the going out of the spirit from God were identical with the going out of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, then it would be impossible for us to sin. Then we would also be God, gods; but one who is essentially God cannot sin. ("Christus non potuit peccare.") Moreover, the proceeding of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son is an act of the divine essence without which the true God cannot be imagined; however, the breathing-in of the human spirit of life was an act of the

will: God might equally well not have done it. Furthermore, it was a momentary act, while the proceeding of the Holy Ghost is as eternal as God. Finally, passing by other passages which describe man as a creature but not as God, it is said of this very spirit of life (neschamah) in Isa. 57: 16: "I (the Lord) have made (asiti from asah) the souls (of men)," hence, created, something which could not be said of the Holy Ghost nor of essential offshoots (children) of God. (Acts 17:28 does not contradict this in any way; for here the context and parallels - 2 Pet. 1:3ff. - supply an entirely different sense.)

Here a quotation from John Gerhard might be in place, who says concerning the transmission of the soul: "One of the foremost reasons set forth against the immortality of the soul is: The soul is brought forth through matter and is transmitted by procreation. Answer: To speak exactly, the soul is not procreated, but it is transmitted; for 'to be procreated' is a predicate of the entire man according to body and soul. But it now follows from this that the soul is transmitted, not that it is perishable. For the nature of the soul is not to be determined from the transmitting, but from its own essence; and its essence consists in this, that it is an incorporeal, invisible and immortal spirit. For every thing is so made as God wanted it to be at the time of creation, and as He has given it to be. If by the 'bringing forth through matter' is meant that the soul originates from bodily seed as such, then we deny that the soul is brought forth through matter. But when this manner of speaking is explained as meaning that man by virtue of divine blessing can procreate something similar to himself after his kind, and thereby transmit the soul, then we concede that the soul is brought forth by virtue of matter, that is, it is not created directly (immediately) by God, but is transmitted by parents to their descendants by virtue of God's order and blessing. But it cannot be concluded from this that the soul cannot exist apart from the body, because both, namely the transmitting of the soul as well as its existence apart from the body, are dependent completely and solely upon the order and the will of God."

There follows in Gerhard a beautiful quotation from Irenaeus, in which he shows that also other creatures, who likewise have a beginning, nevertheless exist eternally according to God's order and will. (Gerhard, *Loci VIII*, p. 106.)

In passing let it be said that the position of Scripture is that of Traducianism, not of Creationism. That is evident from a compilation of Scripture passages such as Job 14:4 ("Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"), John 3:6 ("that which is born of the flesh is flesh," where the Lord by the word "flesh" designates the whole sinful nature in contrast to the Spirit of God and the new spiritual essence of the Christian who has been born again in Him); cp. also Ps. 51:5 et alii. That Luther in the year 1545 also appeared to take this position is shown by the following quotation in Baier's *Compendium* (ed. Walther) II, p. 100: "Qui cogitaverunt, animam ex traduce esse, videntur non penitus aliena a Scripturis sensisse."<sup>\*</sup> Nevertheless we say with John Gerhard: "Modum propagationis inquirendum philosophis relinquimus." (Ibid., p. 101.)<sup>\*\*</sup>

Concerning the matter of "Dichotomy vs. Trichotomy" the following is to be noted: On the basis of passages in which spirit and soul are mentioned alongside each other, as if they were contrasted with one another, people in the church and even more often those concerned with a philosophy colored by Christianity (e.g. Goeschel, Man According to Body, Soul and Spirit) have attempted to show that man consists of three essentially different parts. There is, for example, 1 Thess. 5:23: "Your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless," etc., and Hebr. 4:12: "The word of God... piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit... and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The simplest understanding is that here, with the words "soul and spirit," the whole inward-

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\* "Those who have thought that the soul is by traduction are not regarded as having thought something deeply alien to the Scriptures."

\*\* "Inquiry as to the mode of propagation we leave to the philosophers."

ness of man is meant. One can indeed distinguish in an abstract manner between soul and spirit, as is done above. But looking at the substance of man, soul and spirit are always considered one thing in contrast to the body, just as spirit and soul are used interchangeably in so many passages. So most of our Lutheran teachers hold to the concept of dichotomy as being in accordance with Scripture.

Scripture further teaches us that the soul is not dependent on the body for its existence. That is incontrovertibly set forth by passages in which, while the man is still living on earth, it is asserted or at least presented as quite possible that there is an absence or separation of the soul from the body. Besides Rev. 21:10, the use of which here may perhaps be questioned, we have in 2 Cor. 12:2-3 an assertion of the apostle concerning himself. He is there not speaking about something that will happen after his death or after the Last Day, but of something that had happened to himself fourteen years earlier. "He was caught up into paradise," v. 4. In the New Testament, paradise refers only to the heaven of the blessed, as a comparison of the following passages shows in a simple and convincing manner: Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7; contrasted with the second death, hell, v. 11. The apostle now says: "He was caught up into paradise," he, the real I, the person of the man. Further: "Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell." Thereby he sets forth the possibility that the I, the real person, the soul (spirit) of man, can very well be outside of the body. If that were not possible, then the apostle speaking through the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:13) would have known very well that he was not outside of the body. And could he also be living outside of the body, noticing things, etc.? He certainly could; for "he heard unspeakable words," and calls this experience a "vision" and a "revelation," v. 4.1. So he must have been able to hear and see, to notice things irrespective of his being in the body or not. Thereby it is clearly taught that our spirit, our real I, also apart from the body, can exist, hear, see, perceive, experience things.

Before we now turn to the main point in our inquiry,

the proof for the immortality of the human soul, we shall briefly attempt to fix the difference between the soul of man and the animal soul.

1. Concerning the Creation. Scripture describes for us the creation of animals as an act of God which took place through the mediation of the water, resp. the earth: "Let the waters bring forth," etc.; "Let the earth bring forth," Gen. 1:20, 24. The Word of the Lord stirred up the water, gave the earth power, to bring forth animals.\* These animals of the water and of the earth are designated as nephesch chaja (anima vivens), even as man in Gen. 2:7 is designated as a living being. And yet they had their life, their nephesch, directly from the water, resp. the earth, due of course to the power of the divine Word. But concerning the creation of man, the Holy Ghost tells us that God Himself formed the body and breathed into it the neschamah chajim, the breath of life, directly, without the mediation of any creature. This direct action of God in creating the human soul is clearly set forth in Isa. 57:16: anochi asiti, Ego ipse feci ("the souls which I have made.") By a closer comparison one can find no trace of the idea that the nephesch of animals is an independent essence whose existence without the body might be imagined as can that of the spirit of man, through which alone the body receives life.

2. It is impressed upon us with repeated emphasis in Gen. 1:26, 27 that man was created according to God's image and likeness; he was to bear the similitude of God. The Holy Ghost teaches us through the apostle Paul that this divine image consisted in holiness, righteousness, and a blessed knowledge of God, Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10. But where there is holiness and righteousness, there is also eternal life; for death is the wages only of sin (unholiness, etc.), Rom. 6:23. Only through sin did death come into the world, Rom. 5:12. Having thus created man in holiness and

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\* It should perhaps be mentioned here that some theologians, such as R. Pieper and H. C. Leupold, have questioned this exegesis. - Ed.

righteousness, God therewith and thereby also created him unto eternal life and freedom from all death, hence also unto immortality. - This is not said concerning the animals; rather, the purpose of their creation is given as being the service of man. For the Lord said to man: "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth!" Gen. 1:28. - Cremer remarks in connection with Gen. 1:20-28: "ψυχή ζωσα, just like πνεῦμα, is now attributed to man as well as to an animal: Gen. 1:24; 2:7; 9:10, 16; Lev. 17:10, 11, 14, 15. But in spite of that, man is something special, Gen. 1:26-27. Compare Gen. 2:20 in the Hebrew with the Septuagint translation: Among the animals none could be found that was like, or similar to, man:

ὁμοῖος, kenegedo, that corresponded to him. And this uniqueness expresses itself precisely in the life-principle which he bears in his soul, even as he does not have his life by virtue of that life-power of God which pervades and determines the entire creation, as do the animals (Gen. 1:24; cp. v. 2). Man's life is not a nature-product (Col. 1:16f.) brought forth by the creature in the power of the Spirit of God, but was received by him in a unique manner, by virtue of a special, direct, divine communication. Over against the life-principle operative in nature, as spirit from God's Spirit, stands the life-principle active in man, which is likewise spirit from God's Spirit." (Wörterbuch, p. 888.) Here compare the remarks made earlier concerning neschamah.

3. A third difference consists in this, that the soul of man is endowed with reason, which according to the testimony of Scripture is lacking in the animals. In 2 Pet. 2:12 (cp. Jude 10) it says of the deceivers: "as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed," ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα γεγεννημένα φυσικὰ εἰς ἄλωσιν καὶ φθοράν. In these words the purpose and "spiritual" make-up of animals is given: They are by nature brought forth for the purpose (according to God's will) that they should serve as food, etc. for man. But then they are called ἄλογα - irrational, hence having no reason. Here the question arises which is answered in

so many ways: What is reason? We define reason as the ability to draw conclusions from circumstances perceptible to the senses, or from facts concerning objects or causes that are above the reach of the senses. With this definition we stand on the foundation of Scripture: Rom. 1: 19-21; Acts 17:27; 14:17 et alii. Reason is the mind oriented for metaphysics. Thus, specifically with regard to God, it is the ability to recognize God's existence, essence and attributes (first of all from nature). Paul ascribes this ability to all men, Rom. 1:19ff. Whoever does not make the right use of this ability, as in 2 Pet. 2:12 those false teachers and blasphemers who tempt people to ungodliness, or like those who "say in their hearts: There is no God" (Ps. 14), him Scripture calls a fool, an idiot who renounces his reason and puts himself on the same level with the "brute beast."

Reason as the ability of man's independent spirit is described in Job 32:8: "There is a spirit (of God) in man: and the inspiration (spirit) of the Almighty (nischmath schaddai) giveth them understanding" (gives them the ability to understand). So also in Prov. 20:27: "The spirit of man (nischmath ha-adam) is the candle of the Lord (ner Jehovah); searching (meditating upon) all the inward parts of the belly ( - the innermost being, or the innermost heart). " The spirit of man seeks, "made diligent search" (Ps. 77:7), seeks to comprehend everything, is a light, even if it can only be compared to a candle (ner), from the Lord! Therefore he is also able to enjoy the "rational, pure milk" of divine revelation - provided that the Holy Ghost exercises His restoring power in that light of reason which, though darkened and corrupted through sin, has not been destroyed. But nowhere is a knowledge of God affirmed of animals. To be sure, we are told that "the young ravens cry" to Him (Ps. 147:9); "the beasts groan," (Joel 1:18); "the beasts of the field cry also unto God," (Joel 1:20); yes not only the animals, but "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting in earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God," Rom. 8:19, 22. But since it is certain that animals are without reason, we must



of necessity understand all expressions such as "calling upon, sighing, yearning, being joyful (Ps. 98:8), crying out (Hab. 2:11a), singing" (Isa. 55:12) on the part of creatures, also of animals, as being unconsciously made and presupposing or indicating spiritual consciousness just as little in animals as in the case of "streams of water," "stones," "mountains" etc. (see the preceding passages). Why then are such expressions predicated of them? Answer: Scripture is God's Word; therefore also the creatures are pictured to us as God sees them (or to express it anthropopathically: according to the feelings which they rouse in God). When, for example, unrighteousness increases in the form of avarice, God is moved to anger and punishment as He looks upon the objects of man's covetousness: "the stone shall cry out of the wall," (Hab. 2:11a); when He looks at the earth, which has received Abel's blood at the hands of Cain, then the Lord hears the voice of such blood crying to Him for revenge (Gen. 4:10); when He looks upon creation, how it lies under the curse since man's sin, "subject to vanity and corruption," that is, to sin and to sinful man's misuse of creation (to καταλότης, Rom. 8:20, cp. Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:17ff.), then He feels sympathy for the creature being subjected to the service of sin and corruption; and since He has determined its renewal and rebirth (Ps. 102:26; 104:29-30; Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Matt. 19:28 et alii), it appears to Him in its present misery as a woman in the pangs of childbirth, awaiting with a longing desire the day of blessed joy. Especially in regard to Rom. 8:19ff. we would add the remark that here the apostle, as it were, summarizes the previously cited passages of the Old Testament, even as with the expression *πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις* in v. 22 he places the whole creation before us as though it were one person. And on the basis of such expressions, he can also say *οἶδαμεν* (we know), just as we say: We know that God's Word and Sacrament will not be without fruit.

In this connection it might yet be noted concerning the resurrection of man's body, resp. concerning its reunion with the soul, that this has been decided and revealed

by God. The same person who lives in this eon will also live in the future eon, and there will surely be the same soul as well as the same body. But concerning the creature we are only told that, after it has gone through the fire (2 Pet. 3), it will be renewed. Scripture nowhere teaches or suggests that on the new earth the very same animals will be found who lived here on earth. By assuming a resurrection of animals, one would make them almost equal to man, also in regard to immortality. Moreover, since Scripture is silent on this and has not a word to say concerning animals on the new earth, it thereby teaches that the life of animals (their nephesh, ruach) ceases with their death. For in Lev. 17:11, 14, we are told concerning this nephesh that it is in the blood of animals; thus with the shedding of the blood the soul of the animal ceases to exist. This passage also gives us information as to why the Israelites were forbidden to eat the blood of animals: it was holy to the Lord; "I (God) have given it to you (the Israelites) upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls," v. 11. As a holy possession of the Lord, it was not to be devoted to profane use.

4. Eccl. 3:18-21 is especially misused by unbelievers who, still somewhat acquainted with the Bible, try to show from this passage that even the Bible makes no distinction between man and animal, at least not in regard to their state after death. And when a person looks at this passage only in a superficial manner, it almost appears as though one cannot with good reason reply to such blasphemy. For it says: "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; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth - ." "A preacher of the free-thinkers once read this passage to a large gathering of people, and then, accompanied by the roaring applause of the crowd, said scornfully that at times the Bible is found even among the free-

thinkers. Because of this passage the book of Ecclesiastes (Heb. Koheleth) has experienced the humiliation of being a favorite book of Voltaire and of Frederick the Great, though the latter certainly also treasured the governmental wisdom in the book. Yes, there have been believing Bible scholars, such as Hengstenberg and Hahn, who have been so fearful because of this passage that they tried to force another meaning into it by artificial exegesis. Hengstenberg translates: 'Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, the one that ascends on high, and the spirit of the beast, the one that descends downward to the earth?' And Hahn very similarly: 'than the one which' etc. Thereby they remove the doubt (offense) and allow Ecclesiastes to say here: Yes, the spirit of man has a wonderful advantage over the soul of the animal; he ascends upward and they descend downward. The Masoretes also punctuated it in this way; Ewald says that they twice changed the interrogative ha into an article ('who' instead of 'whether' (German)), obviously because the question here was offensive to them. (Also the English Bible translates according to the Masoretes, as does Hengstenberg). But the old translations, from the Septuagint to Luther, here pose the doubting question which is required by the grammatical construction and the context: Who knoweth, whether the spirit..." etc. (Greve, Eccles., p. 60).

If we really wish to understand this passage rightly, we must first give attention to the scope of the entire book and then to the exact wording of the passage itself. 1. Upon close examination the scope of the entire book is obviously nothing else than the clear demonstration to men of the futility and transitoriness of the present eon, in order that man might not set his heart on this world and its joys when things go well with him, and that he might not have doubts and lose his composure when he must suffer and endure many things on earth. For everything has its season, whether it be laughing or weeping; nothing that belongs to this world endures eternally. "Vanity, vanity of vanities" is the signature of this world. And in connection with that Ecclesiastes points ahead to the future eon, especially to

the judgment at which each person must appear after this life; see especially the conclusion, 11:9; 12:1, 7, 14; cp. also 5:1. If it was Solomon's purpose to warn men not to let their hearts be taken in by the things of this world but that they should prepare for the future world, then it would be the height of foolishness if a person were to believe that in any passage of the book he would deny the future world as far as man is concerned. For then why should a person still prepare to stand before God if there is no future world for him, and if there will be no judgment? Solomon, the wisest of men, was not so foolish, and still less was the Holy Ghost, speaking through him, so foolish that he would contradict himself (somewhat after the manner of a "higher critic"). - 2. The exact wording of the entire passage (3: 18-22) also presents not the slightest cause for us to be disturbed, thinking that we have found materialism in these words. Following is the most faithful wording possible: V. 18: "I said in my heart concerning the nature of the children of men: God has made them different (separate), and yet to appear to themselves as animals. V. 19: For the fate of the children of men is also the fate of the animals, and is one fate to them: as this one dies, so the other dies (or: as with one, so with the other), and one spirit (breath, ruach) is common to them all, and man has no advantage over the animal; for all is vanity (habel, transitory). V. 20: All are wandering to one place; all consist of dust, and all return again to the dust. V. 21: Who knows the spirit of the children of men, whether this is ascending on high, and the spirit of the animal, whether this is descending to the earth? V. 22: Therefore I have seen that nothing is good (better) than that a man rejoice in his work (or belongings); for this is his portion; for who will lead him to see what will happen after him?" - As we immediately recognize from this very exact rendition of the Hebrew wording, the beginning already in V. 18 determines the meaning of the entire passage. Solomon meditates in his heart concerning the manner or the essence (Wesen, al-dibrath, from dabar, λόγος ) of man. He first establishes the fact that God surely made man different, or

"separate." And in what way did He make man different? In what way or from what did He make man separate? Naturally, from the animal, from the beasts (behemah), as is made incontestably clear in the following words. In these words he also substantiates the fact that God has made a difference between men and animals. Through the vav adversativum (or better vav restrictivum, since it is to introduce a limitation of the statement that was made), he now stresses the very opposite, how in this vain world it concerns the "esteem" or the appearance (*aspectus*), so that no one can say on the basis of reason, which can only draw conclusions from that which can be physically perceived, that there is any essential difference between man and animals. In this entire passage there is also an implied warning not to judge by the outward appearance, but to obtain the correct information from the words of Him who thus created man.

Luther gives the meaning in the following manner: "One can usually say that all living creatures under the sun, the world and the children of Adam, appear as though they were animals .... No man on earth, here under the sun, can on the basis of human reason understand, recognize or believe that there is an eternal life and that the soul will not die. For when reason, human wisdom, and the five senses are to judge, see and feel according to their imaginations, we must invariably conclude that a man dies away, decays, and becomes dust just like an animal; they both have the same kind of breath, so that there appears to be no difference. If God had not enlightened His believers through the Holy Spirit, as through a new light, then no one could say on the basis of reason that there is any difference between man and animals. For both are dust and will return to dust. And since both are going to one place, there is a similarity between man and animals. Not that it is that way; but when the world and human reason see that one dies like the other, and that it happens with one as with the other, they cannot think otherwise. But if anyone is going to believe or hold a higher view, that belongs to the sphere of the Holy Ghost and is a higher light and knowledge than

may be found under the sun or in the world." (Eberle, Luth. Ps. III:72.)

I would also point out that in this passage our own ignorance concerning the spirit of the animal is expressed: Who knows whether the spirit of the animal descends down to the earth? No one, on the basis of his practical observation or from his reason, can affirm either the mortality or the immortality of the animal soul.

Joh. Gerhard remarks on this passage: "Solomon speaks from that knowledge which one has from nature and from one's own experience, which a person acquires by observation of those things which happen to man in common with the animal. For to all appearances there seems to be no difference between man and animal. But from the revealed Word we recognize through spiritual knowledge that there is a very great difference in the death of man and of the animal, since the soul of man is immortal and his body in due time will be awakened from the dust of the ground, neither of which will happen to the animal. That Solomon does not deny this spiritual knowledge concerning the immortality of the soul or that it applies to man, is made clear in Ch. 12:7: 'The spirit shall return unto God who gave it.'" (Loc. de morte, # 152.)

### III. The Immortality of the Soul.

To attempt to prove the immortality of the human soul to outspoken materialists (or modern "Monists") would be a waste of time. By application of logic and mental acumen alone we would get no farther than Plato did even in his time, namely, that it is quite probable that man's spirit is immortal, since he has been gifted with reason by God and thus stands infinitely higher than the animal, since he never achieves contentment and rest in this life, and since in this life there are so many wrongs that are not atoned for and thus require a punishment after death. Nevertheless neither philosophy nor reason can give us absolute certainty concerning immortality.

The situation is different with those who still recognize Holy Scripture as the Word of God, or who are at least willing to let it be a rule, guide and foundation of their faith. When the immortality of the soul is denied by such, as for example by Socinians and Adventists, it is comparatively easy to show that such denial offends against God's Word. For in both the Old and New Testaments it is clearly taught that the soul of man is immortal, imperishable.

We shall attempt to demonstrate this from several statements of Scripture. We shall begin with the New Testament because it seems to testify to the immortality of the soul more directly, expressively and frequently than does the Old Testament.

1. Proof from the New Testament, that the soul is immortal. - The Lord says expressly in Matt. 10:28 that the body can be killed, but the soul can not. That which cannot be killed is immortal. Augustine said on this: "How can I be certain that the soul does not die? Hear the Lord Himself who assures this to His disciples: 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul!' Thus the soul is certainly immortal." Here some, including the Socinians and Adventists, would object, saying that in the following words we read: "But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." They say that since "destroy" is parallel to "kill" in the preceding sentence, it must indicate and express at least this much, that the souls of the ungodly are killed in hell, do not remain alive, and hence are not immortal. To this we answer: One can never with certainty derive a doctrine from the parallelismus membrorum (parallelism of members); it is better to stay with the wording. When we are told concerning the body and soul of the ungodly that God will "destroy" them in hell, this refers to the punishment of hell, the eternal torment, the "everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:9) which will be inflicted as punishment upon the ungodly in the final judgment. A real death or being killed, in the same sense in which one speaks of the body, cannot be meant because the death of the body lasts for only a mo-

ment of time (viewing it as an act), whereas Scripture testifies that the torment of hell endures for ever and ever, Rev. 20:10. But since there is an "everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:9), and since "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. 14:11), it follows that both body and soul of those who are in hell will "live," be immortal. To be sure, this eternal destruction in hell is also called a death, "the second death"; yet an exact definition of this expression is given in Scripture: "This second death is the lake of fire," Rev. 20:14. And so all excuse for any misunderstanding is removed, as though the second death were an annihilation or a ceasing of the condemned to exist. - From the words of the Lord in Matt. 10:28 it is proved beyond a doubt that the soul does not die, even when the body is killed; furthermore, that the souls of the ungodly in hell will again have their bodies; and finally, that they are "destroyed" in hell by the Lord, that is, they are punished with eternal torment and pain, suffering as it were an eternal death, the "second death."

The doctrine of the eternity of punishment in hell is the great stumblingblock which, for those who judge God according to the yardstick of their reason and their fantasy and who, according to their fanatical notions of love proceeding from hearts that are alienated from God's Word, would bring the devil himself into heaven, is a cause of falling. It is such also for those who in their own works seek a righteousness that has worth before God and who are constantly warned by their conscience that they will not stand before God's judgment. They try to comfort themselves at least in this way, that they deny the eternity of the punishment in hell and twist the meaning of the clear passages of Scripture. Nevertheless, clear passages of Scripture are not easily perverted: every impartial person who takes Scripture as it stands will soon understand what it means.

When Mark 9:43 says of hell that it is an unquenchable fire, this same thought being repeated three (four?) times in Vv. 44-48, and each time the torment of hell is set forth as something that is eternal, by the words:



"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," then those words are surely clear enough. The Savior is plainly referring to the words with which the prophet Isaiah closed his book, where he describes the condemned as "the carcases of the men that have transgressed against God," Isa. 66:24, and with this expression likewise characterizes the eternal torment of hell as eternal death.

That the souls of those who are already in hell actually exist, even though their bodies have long since returned to dust, that such souls also have feelings, e.g. that they are able to hear, is beyond doubt to be concluded from the words in 1 Pet. 3:19, where it says that Christ after His resurrection went and preached unto the spirits of those who at one time had not believed the preaching of Noah. Since the place is here designated with the word "prison" ( φυλακή ), in which the spirits of the unbelievers from times past were kept, one may properly and rightfully understand this to mean nothing other than that which Scripture otherwise calls "hell." For our purposes, this passage teaches us, on the one hand, that the souls of these unbelievers were not annihilated when they died in the flood, but had existed for millennia without a body, for they are called spirits ( πνεύματα ); and on the other hand, that they were capable of feelings, for otherwise Christ would not have preached to them. Finally, they were in a prison, which was certainly not the place of salvation, but was a place of torment which they could not leave.

The Lord teaches us the same thing, expressly and in detail, in the parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31. Whether this was an event which actually happened or was only a parable does not change in the slightest the doctrinal content of this section. In both cases the scope of the Lord in reporting this event is the same: He would teach us that no conclusion concerning a person's state of grace before God is justified on the basis of his circumstances in this life, whether things go well with him or not. Therefore in the second part of the story, which because of its minuteness of detail even seems to be the main part of the section, He gives us a glimpse into the

hereafter, in order to instruct us concerning the destiny of the departed souls. Concerning the rich man, who had lived grandly and in joy all his days, the Lord says that he died and was buried. His body was thus committed to the earth with great honor ("buried," a word not mentioned with Lazarus). And while his body lay in the earth, he found himself in hell and in torment. He, his true I, his soul, was thus in a "place of torment" ( τόπος τῆς βασάνου , v. 28) and must suffer. (The Lord plainly refers here to Ps. 49: 14.) Whoever, in the face of this doctrinal presentation of our Lord Jesus, would maintain (as do the Adventists, "Scripture Ref.", p. 28) that here "those people existing in Hades are pictured as living, just as we today in parables allow animals and trees to speak," such an one is openly striking Scripture in the face, is looking for an excuse to deny that very thing which God would teach him. Moreover they do not perceive how they are fighting themselves; for when there are "people" in "Hades," then they are also living; we do not call the dead "people," but "corpses." And what is a person supposed to think when the Lord allows corpses to speak!

Thus far we have seen that the souls of the ungodly live on after the death of the body, but in the torment of hell. We shall now look at a few passages of Scripture which speak of the destiny of the souls of the righteous after death.

In Acts 7:59, Stephen prayed: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" And then "he fell asleep." From this it is apparent that the spirit (soul) of Stephen went in to his Savior, while the body fell asleep and was laid in its little sleeping chamber by devout people, Acts 8:2. The Lord Jesus, whom Stephen called upon and to Whom his spirit entered in, was neither in "Hades" nor in a grave, nor in any place other than the right hand of God, in glory, in the heaven of the blessed. And that this prayer of Stephen did not originate from any false delusion, as a perverter of Scripture might assert, is evident from the testimony of Scripture when it says that Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:55), and also from the words of the apostle Paul,

who says of himself:

Phil. 1:23: "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (namely, for my sake, v. 24). His I, his spirit, wanted to be with Christ in the heavenly joy. So also in 2 Cor. 5:8 he says that his home is with Christ, and that the believers on earth are pilgrims wandering in a foreign land; after having asserted in 2 Cor. 5:1ff. that "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Could Paul, with such expressions, have wished to describe the grave, or the "Hades" (Scheol), as some fools allege?

Another passage which tells us that the souls of the believers enter into the eternal salvation immediately after they "put off their earthly tabernacle" (2 Pet. 1:14) is the promise which the Lord on the cross gave to the penitent malefactor: Luke 23:43. The malefactor had prayed: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!" He thus prayed that the Lord would remember him in grace, when He would come again in His glory for judgment, in order to reveal His kingdom and to deliver the glorious inheritance of His kingdom to His own. That this was the meaning of the prayer can be seen from a comparison with 2 Tim. 4:1 and Matt. 25:34. And since the malefactor was probably caught in the Jewish delusion (which is further developed and fixed in the Talmud), that the believers would come into their share of eternal salvation only with the resurrection on the Last Day, the Lord promised him with an oath that he would go to Him in paradise today, that very same day. The "today" in this promise was to destroy the wrong notion of the malefactor; it stands in opposition to the day of Christ's coming in His kingdom. For that very reason the Lord could not have said: "Verily, I say unto thee today, Thou shalt..." etc., as the Adventists punctuate it. For another reason also it would be absurd to understand it in this way; for the malefactor knew very well by himself that the Lord was not speaking to him yesterday or tomorrow.

Numerous other passages according to which the

souls of those who die in the Lord will be transferred into paradise include: Rev. 6:9; 20:4; 14:13; also Matt. 22:32 (Luke 20:38; Mark 12:27), where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are described as living before God.

2. Proof from the Old Testament, that the soul is immortal. - Franz Delitzsch says (Commentary on Isa., Ch. 65): "The Old Testament in general knows nothing about a blessed hereafter. Beyond this life there is Hades, Scheol" etc. (Quoted in the Report of the Freik. 1885, 37.) It is self-evident that he did not intend this to be understood as a denial on his part of the immortality of the soul; rather, he was inclined to the Roman error that the Old Testament believers were freed from Scheol only by Christ's descent into hell and were then brought into the heavenly paradise.

Adventists and other enthusiasts maintain that "Scheol" is used in only one meaning, namely, that this word designates only the "grave." They then seek in this a "proof" for their dream that the Old Testament knows nothing about immortality.

However, it can be clearly shown from many passages of the Old Testament that the believers in the Old Testament believed in the immortality of the soul as well as the fact that immediately after bodily death (or the forsaking of this world) they would enter in unto God and the blessed rest of the people of God. If these two truths are not expressed in such clear, explicit words as in the New Testament, the reason is that at that time it was not particularly necessary to emphasize and explain such well-known truths: Everyone in Israel knew from childhood on that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and that no torment shall touch them." Not until after the exile and after the time of the prophets did a pious writer find it necessary to emphasize this truth over against the increasing ignorance and unbelief, when he wrote: "God created man for eternal life and made him in the image, that he should be in His own likeness. But through the envy of the devil death came into the world; and they that are on his side help this along. But the souls of the right-

eous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seem to have died, and their departure was looked on as a painful thing, and their going away from us for utter destruction; but they are in peace." Book of Wisdom 2:23 - 3:3.

Gen. 5:24 is the first passage in which is described for us the blessed entrance of a person to God. Enoch led a godly life, and "God took him." This "taking" is expressed by the word lakach and means "receive, take up, ad se recipere" (Gerh., Comm. ad l.). Enoch was thus "taken up to God," and by this nothing else can be meant than his removal into a "blessed hereafter," into heaven. For "our God is in heaven."

We read a very similar description in connection with the ascension of Elijah, whom the holy angels in the form of a chariot and horses of fire took to heaven, 2 Kings 2:11. (Like Enoch, Elijah was taken to heaven also according to the body.) Obviously, under these fiery forms appeared angels, who are not only called seraphim (from saraph, to burn; cp. also 2 Kings 6:17), but are also compared with "a flaming fire," Ps. 104:4. In Luke 16:22 we are told that the angels carried the soul of Lazarus into Abraham's bosom. Now it is further reported to us in Matt. 17 that on the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elijah appeared to the Lord as messengers from heaven, since they spoke with the Lord of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, especially since they too "appeared in glory," Luke 9:30f. Thus both were already in heaven. But we are not told concerning Moses, as we are of Elijah, that he was taken alive to heaven, but rather that he died on Mount Nebo, and that the Lord Himself buried his body, Deut. 34:6. Since Moses by his death had entered into the heavenly glory, as is made clear from passages of the New Testament which shed light on his present state, so also the expressions used to proclaim to him his approaching death must have had this meaning, that through death he would enter into salvation. The Lord said to him in Deut. 32:50: "Be gathered unto thy people." We read these words also of Abraham in Gen. 25:8, of Isaac in

Gen. 35:29, and of Jacob's death in Gen. 49:29; concerning them the Lord also testified that they "sit in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 8:11.

The result of this compilation of different Scripture passages of the Old Testament, seen in the light of the New Testament, is clear and unmistakable before the eyes of every one who is not prejudiced. There can be no other conclusion than this, that the believers of the Old Covenant, immediately after their departure from this world, were "gathered to their people," that is, as shown above, were received into the glory of eternal life. Thus they would not have to wait in a misconstrued Scheol until Christ's descent into hell, or even until the Last Day. Apart from the extraordinary display of grace in the cases of Enoch and Elijah, bodily death was the door to heaven, the means by which the believers were "taken to God." So it is also today, as Stephen and the malefactor show us.

Another passage is Isa. 63:16. There the prophet says: "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not." In these words the existence, the life, of Abraham and Isaac is affirmed by being presupposed; but even though they live, namely in heaven, yet they no longer concern themselves with the things of this world, know nothing more about them.

In Isa. 57:1-2, we are told concerning the righteous that they "enter into peace" when they are "taken away from the evil." But to "enter into peace" cannot possibly refer to anything else than to attain to salvation; for shalom to the Israelite was a word that was synonymous with all good.

Outside of Daniel 12:13, I would in conclusion still point to Eccl. 12:7, where Solomon says, in words which cannot be misunderstood, that "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." When the Adventists remark concerning this last passage: "The breath of life or the life principle, which God has given to man, returns again to Him who gave it, yet never as a rational and intelligent being, but simply as a life principle; and men cannot destroy this," - then, if

we do not ignore the passages of Scripture treated above, it is evident to any intelligent person that only the most shameful fraud and distortion of Scripture could explain the words of Solomon in such a way, since even Solomon in this book always points to the judgment following after death. Only one step farther, and such enthusiasts would fully have embraced Buddhism, with its Nirvana in which the soul is eternally absorbed.

Moreover, I am of the firm conviction that within the Old Testament's manner of speaking (e. g. Isa. 45:22; Ps. 31:5; 91:16; Lev. 18:5, cp. with Luke 10:28 and countless other passages) also the blessed estate of the believers after death was expressed unambiguously and unmistakably for the contemporaries of the Old Testament, even when learned Jews of our day no longer understand such expressions in their full significance, since it is now a "dead" (and yet so full of life) language.

What Scripture asserts concerning the present condition of souls corrupted by sin (e. g. Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4; Ps. 14; John 3:6; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1, 5) belongs under the doctrine of original sin.

Arthur Schulz



## PANORAMA

BOOK "Better Living Through Christ,"  
 REVIEWS by John H. Schaal; Studies in the  
 Book of Hebrews, Laymen's Bible  
 Study Course; Baker Book House  
 (copyright, the Reformed Bible  
 Institute, 1968); paperback, 128  
 pages; \$1.95.

Now and then a newly published religious work, appearing without much fanfare, may generate an exceptional degree of excitement when it comes to the attention of a reviewer. This is such a book. Its title may be somewhat misleading in this respect; but do not be put off by it. A look at the sub-title and a quick glance between the covers should make a pastor's pulse quicken.

Here is a treatment of the Epistle to the Hebrews, prepared in a series of sixteen lessons, aimed at intensive Bible study work and suitable for congregational Bible class presentation. Indeed, its design is more than suitable; it is excellent. There are instructions included for its use by the individual Christian; but this reviewer would express the opinion that relatively few lay persons are theologically competent enough to derive full benefit through private study of the material.

Hebrews is a Bible book too little appreciated and perhaps not often treated cursorily in Bible study groups. Yet it is one of the rich treasures of the New Testament. This book helps the pastor to make it accessible to his people. Each chapter includes a page of questions and suggestions for further topic study; some include blank space for notes. The translation selected for use is that of the American Standard Version. The reason for this choice is not apparent, and introduces a regrettable element of difficulty. Very few of our laymen have a copy of the ARV available to them.



There has been neither time nor occasion for the undersigned to test the book by practical use. Thus also not every line or page has been scrutinized as it would be searched out and tested by any pastor in preparing for presentation. But the general impression left through samplings and quick overviews is that the book is remarkably free of the doctrinal weaknesses one might fear to find in the theology of a Calvinist author. John Schaal is connected with the Reformed Bible Institute of Grand Rapids, Mich., and is editor of Sunday School publications of the Christian Reformed Church (perhaps best known among us as the church that sponsored the radio preaching of the late Peter Eldersveld). In one or two places there seemed to be a faint suggestion of a millennialistic outlook. But in the main the author is faithful, and often brilliantly responsive, to the true message of Hebrews; and any faithful Lutheran pastor should be able to use the work with great profit to himself and his Bible class.

We suggest that our pastors order a copy and see for themselves. The cost is nominal.

E. Schaller

Briefly listed without critical comment:

"Paul And His Epistles," by Doremus Almy Hayes; reprint, 1969, by Baker Book House (originally published 1915); 487 pages plus bibliography and index; Cloth: \$6.95.

Primarily an isagogical treatment of the letters of the great Apostle. It begins with an evaluation of this servant of the Lord, and with a general appraisal of the nature of his epistles. Then the letters themselves are studied historically and by content, in the chronological order in which they were written.

E. Schaller

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